

Only in America – Chapter 1 – A New Home

When Gary's brother lay dying from Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma at Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, he had flown back to northern Iowa to be with his brother. The two of them had never gotten along for some reason. Maybe it was just the really dysfunctional home they had been raised in. A workaholic father and an alcoholic mother didn't exactly create the best home life. His father had suggested a cup of coffee and as they sat in the hospital dining room, had brought up the subject of dying and his estate.

"I'm not going to live forever," his father had said, "Are you grown up enough yet to handle your share of my estate? I'm talking maybe \$500 - \$600 thousand."

"What do you want me to say?" Gary asked. "I've had my rough spots but we're doing better now."

"I'm doing some estate planning and I just wanted to hear what you had to say," his father responded. "I'm trying to decide whether to leave you the money outright or to put it into a trust fund."

"It's your money," Gary said, dismissively, "Do what you want."

His brother passed the next morning. Gary stayed for the funeral and soon thereafter returned to California. His father's grief was more than he could handle. It was almost as if his brother had been an only child, Gary thought, never having experienced the loss of a child himself. Finally his father went to a shrink and was given a prescription for an anti-depressant. Gary and Sharon drove over to Phoenix the following winter to visit his father and stepmother.

"You can't imagine what it's like," his father said, "One little pill a day and I'm a new man."

"Yeah right, dad," Gary thought, "Better living through Chemistry."

The subject of his father's estate was never brought up again. His father lived for 9 years after his brother's death, passing in January 2001. The day after the funeral, Gary contacted the family attorney at his stepmother's urging and was told to be at the bank at 10am.

At the bank, his father's attorney and a banker he'd never met gave him a copy of his father's will. The will was a skimpy 2-page document, but it was dynamite. His father left him half of his estate, in trust. Never expecting to have his wife outlive him, his father had made only nominal provisions for Gary's stepmother. When Gary stopped by the nursing home after the meeting and showed the will to her, she fairly went through the roof.

"What am I going to live on?" she protested. "I thought he was going to leave me at

least enough to pay for the nursing home!”

Gary didn't want any part of that argument. He told his stepmother to do whatever she felt was right, he didn't intend to interfere. Money, he said, couldn't buy happiness. He returned to California and let the lawyers, the bank and his stepmother to work out the details.

His stepmother hired an attorney and prepared to contest the will. The day before she was to sign the papers, she had a fatal heart attack. As the time drug on, Gary occasionally checked with the bank to see how they were coming settling the estate. The banker was not very informative, citing his father's vast holding of stocks, bonds and property.

Finally, nearly a year after he'd lost his father and stepmother; Gary received a large envelope from the attorney for the estate. He was dumbfounded when he read the documents; some of his father's holdings had, especially the tech stocks, increased sharply in value. The total estate, before taxes went to over \$25 million.

According to the documents, the bank had been selling off most of the assets and converting them into cash. It took another 7 months for the estate to settle. Gary ended up with a trust fund valued at \$6.2 million. All of the income earned by the investments during the probate period became part of the principal of the estate and Gary had yet to see a penny 19 months after his father's death.

Gary called the banker and inquired about the income stream from the trust fund. What could he expect in terms of income? When would the payments be made? Getting information out of the banker and attorney was like pulling teeth. Gary didn't need the money and didn't care; he did abhor the vacuum that existed concerning the status of the estate. Soon, he was told.

Gary received an email from the banker. It seemed that a local life insurance agent was looking for him. His father had left a sizable insurance policy and he should call the insurance agent. He put it off for a couple of days and finally called. It seemed that he had almost \$70 thousand coming. The gal at the insurance office would forward the papers and all he had to do was sign them in the presence of a Notary and mail them back. Gary took care of that the day he received the papers and 3 weeks later, he received a check for \$68 thousand and change.

“What do you intend to spend the money on dear?” Sharon asked.

“I think it's time to get the hell out of California,” Gary answered, “You can't own a gun anymore and since the World Trade Center thing last year, I just don't feel safe here. I wouldn't mind moving back to Iowa.”

“If you do, you're going alone,” Sharon replied, “I can't take the cold weather anymore.”

"Where do you want to live?" Gary asked.

"Phoenix wouldn't be too bad," Sharon said.

"Too many people," Gary countered, "I want to get out in the sticks. How about rural Arizona?"

"That might be all right," Sharon conceded, "Just not too rural."

Gary called his best friend Ron with the news of the insurance settlement.

"What are you going to do with all of that money Gar-Bear," Ron asked.

"I think that we're going to move to eastern Arizona, Ron," Gary confided. "Sharon put the kibosh on moving back to Iowa and I sure don't want to move to a big city."

"My brother lives a half days drive from there," Ron said, "Just across the border into New Mexico, south of Durango, Colorado."

"I wish you and Linda would come, too," Gary suggested.

"I'll be moving, too Gary," Ron admitted, "But it will be to New Mexico, not Arizona. I want to move up near my brother."

They visited for a while and after the call, Gary got on the Internet and began to look for real estate listings in eastern Arizona. He found a section of ground listed near Holbrook that interested him. The price was right, he thought, at \$300 per acre. At that price, it must be bare desert, just what he was looking for. He printed out the real estate listing for later use and got ready to drive to the bank to deposit the check.

Sharon was already making a list of things she wanted to spend the money on. He checked the mail before he left for the bank. There was a letter from the bank and the envelope contained a letter and a check for \$27,534. The letter said that when the attorney had reviewed the file, he had found an error and that the check represented income to Gary that had inadvertently been added to the principal of the trust. This was a good day.

Gary deposited the two checks totaling a few dollars over \$96 thousand into their checking account. When he got home, he suggested to Sharon that they take a road trip to Holbrook to check out the property. Holbrook is on the banks of the Little Colorado River in northeastern Arizona's Navajo County high plateau country.

In 1881 railroad tracks were laid in northeastern Arizona passing through an area known as Horsehead Crossing. The following year a railroad station was built at Horsehead Crossing and the community's name was changed to Holbrook in honor of H. R. Holbrook, first chief engineer of the Atlantic and Pacific Railroad. Holbrook, at an eleva-

tion of 5,080 feet, became the county seat of Navajo County in 1895 and was incorporated in 1917.

Holbrook is an important trade center for northeastern Arizona. Its location on historic Route 66 and on Interstate 40 at the junction of four major highways, between the Apache Sitgreaves National Forest to the south and the Navajo and Hopi Indian Reservations to the north, makes tourism important to the local economy. Government employment is also significant because Holbrook is the Navajo County seat and the site of various state and federal field offices. All of Navajo County is a designated Enterprise Zone.

The Cholla Power Plant, Arizona Public Service's largest coal-fired generating station is located just outside of Holbrook and employs approximately 250 workers. The population of the city was 5,645 in 1998.

Gary checked on local real estate market. Bare, one-acre lots south of Holbrook in the mountains near Snowflake were going for nearly \$30,000. The \$300-per-acre property must not be very good, he thought. It took him the entire day to convince Sharon to make the two-day drive to Holbrook. They left Wednesday morning, intending to spend a day in Holbrook and stopping in Sedona on the return trip. They arrived in Holbrook late Thursday afternoon and Gary called the realtor and made an appointment for the next morning.

Holbrook wasn't very large and there was little to see around town. It was easy for them to find the realtor's office the next morning and they arrived a few minutes early for their 9am appointment. The realtor explained that a local rancher had died and his widow had decided to sell off the ranch in one-section parcels, rather than as a complete spread.

The remaining section hadn't attracted much attention because the ground was very rough and unsuitable for grazing or even as a real estate development. The widow had gotten a very good price for the other sections and just wanted to unload the last 640 acres.

The three of them got into the realtor's Cherokee and he drove them to the section. The section was located on a blacktop road about 20 miles outside of Holbrook. Gary could immediately see why no one would want the property; it had several ravines and was hilly in spots. The realtor drove them all around the land and Gary noticed things that appealed to him that no doubt had driven other prospective buyers away. One ravine was about 40 feet deep and 60 feet wide where it ran by the base of the tallest hill on the property. "Perfect," he thought to himself. They returned to the realtor's office, visited a bit about the property and returned to the motel.

"Sharon, I'd like to make an offer on that property," Gary suggested. "That ravine at the foot of the hill would be a perfect location for the home I want to build."

“Are you out of your mind?” Sharon asked. “A ravine means running water. Why would you want to put a home there?”

“Because,” Gary said, unrolling the home plans he’d spent months drawing, “We wouldn’t have to excavate for the basement for the house. I’ve never been able to get you to pay attention, Sharon. The plan I have drawn up provides for two basements, one above the other.”

“Why?” Sharon asked, “Are you still on that bomb shelter kick?”

“Sort of yes,” Gary admitted. “Look at these plans again, honey, please. The plan for the house is for a 40’x80’ house with a full basement. Beneath the basement is a second basement, constructed with 2’ thick walls and roof. You gain access to the subbasement from stairs in the basement. The subbasement has a storage room, kitchen, bedrooms and all of the mechanicals for the house, including the furnace, hot water heater and a standby generator.

“At a \$100 a square foot minimum, that house will cost \$320,000 without the cost of the land or the extras for your subbasement,” Sharon protested.

“Actually, I was thinking of putting a triple wide mobile home on the basement,” Gary said, “You’re right about the house costing so much. If we got a triple-wide with a desert package, we could cut the cost by $\frac{2}{3}$.”

“How are you going to put a mobile home over a basement?” Sharon challenged.

“I planned to put steel trusses across the ceilings of the basement and subbasement,” Gary explained. “My plans are for the subbasement to be 12’ high and basement to be 10’ high. The trusses would support the weight of the 2’ thick roof of the subbasement and the weight of the house. Remember the mobile home they erected across from us in Davenport?”

“Yes, Gil put in concrete runners and sat the house on the runners,” Sharon remembered.

“This is the same idea Sharon, only I would use steel trusses instead of the concrete runners,” Gary replied.

“But, the asking price for the land is \$192,000,” Sharon protested realizing she was losing the battle.

“I was thinking of offering \$160,000 cash, Sharon,” Gary said, “\$100,000 down and the balance when we sold our home in Palmdale. That would leave us with about \$165,000 to put in the foundations and buy the home. We should be able to pay off any balance in one or two years from income from the trust fund.”

“Gary, your mother only had a trust fund worth \$80,000 and she took \$450 a month out of the fund,” Sharon replied, “Shouldn’t your trust pay you at about the same rate? That would give us almost \$420,000 a year income. We could pay it off in a year.”

“I’m only willing to count on half that amount Sharon,” Gary said, “Clinton left us in a recession and Bush isn’t getting us out of it.”

“OK, go ahead and make the offer Gary,” Sharon said, “But I am not so sure about living 20 miles from the nearest town.”

“What concerns you about that, honey?” Gary asked.

“If you have to ask, you’d never understand,” Sharon replied. “Go ahead, make the offer.”

They drove to the realtor’s office and sat down with the man to make an offer. Gary offered \$128,000 for the property, telling the realtor that he couldn’t see where the property was worth more than \$200 an acre. The realtor excused himself and went to his office. About 15 minutes later, he came back and said that his client would come down to \$275 an acre. Gary countered the offer at \$250 an acre and the realtor again excused himself. He was back in another fifteen minutes with a smile on his face.

“She accepted your offer, Mr. Olsen, congratulations,” the realtor said. “How do you intend to pay for the property?”

“I was thinking of putting \$100,000 down and financing the balance for the time it will take us to sell our home in Palmdale,” Gary replied.

“She was willing to sell the land on a short term contract, why don’t you go back to the motel and I’ll call you later,” the realtor replied, “She might be willing to carry you for a few months at, say 6% interest, if you’d be interested.”

“Great, ask her and let us know,” Gary replied. They left the office, had an early lunch at a Mexican restaurant and returned to the motel. Around 2pm the phone rang. The realtor said the client would accept \$100,000 down and finance the \$60,000 balance for up to 6 months.

Gary and Sharon returned to the office and wrote the check for \$100,000. After they returned to the motel, they talked it over and decided to make the trip to Sedona a short one. They’d just spend a portion of the next day sightseeing and head back to California. Gary got into his usual driving rut and he drove straight through from Sedona to Palmdale, arriving late Saturday night.

Monday morning, they called a realtor and listed their home. They were asking \$250,000. The housing market was going up and they found a ready, qualified buyer within 5 weeks, but this is getting ahead of the story.

Gary and Sharon spent 10 days sorting through 15 plus years of accumulated junk. They ended up with a garage full and half the patio stacked with things they intended to discard. They called a local trash hauler and had him dispose of the junk. There was a Fleetwood Homes dealer in Palmdale and they went to his location to look at triple-wide mobile homes. They really fell in love with one that went for \$115,000.

Gary had received a monthly income payment from the trust fund of just over \$40,000. The income varied from month to month, sometimes running as high as \$52,000 and sometimes as low as zero. They put a \$35,000 down payment on the home and ordered it for delivery to the property in Holbrook. The dealer said he would have to arrange for someone in Arizona to erect the home. Gary explained that it was being erected over a basement and showed the dealer the plans. At first, the dealer was a little leery, but after he examined the plans, decided that it would be easier than normal to assemble the home. Delivery would be in four weeks he told them.

Things were getting ahead of Gary. He only had about \$6,000 cash left and he estimated that the basements would run in excess of 23,000 cubic feet of concrete, or about 852 yards. At \$50 a yard, a rough estimate, the raw materials alone would cost him about \$43,000. And, that didn't include installation or the steel trusses. They would clear \$225,000 on the home and with the \$6,000 he had on hand, they would barely have \$10,000 left by the time the home was in place and paid for, the land paid for and the basements installed. That didn't allow for the well, septic system, the generator, new furniture, propane and water tanks and the other things they needed. He decided it was time to establish himself in Holbrook.

Gary drove straight through to Holbrook. Once he started the motor on the car, he usually drove to wherever he was going. Palmdale to Charles City was a 24-30 hour drive, give or take. Holbrook was 14 hours. He checked into a motel and got a good night's sleep. The next morning, he went to the local Wells Fargo Branch and asked to speak to the manager. Gary explained that he was a long time customer from California who had recently purchased property in the area and was in the process of moving to the Holbrook area.

He gave the manager all the information concerning the sale of his California home, his trust fund and his land purchase. He asked the banker if it would be possible to open a revolving line of credit to permit him to complete the construction project. Gary offered to put up the new property to secure the credit line. The manager said that he'd have to check out Gary's references and would let him know. Gary told him where he was staying and asked the manager to recommend a good, reliable concrete contractor in the area.

After he left the bank, Gary looked up the contractor who had been recommended. Gary didn't have any formal blueprints, just his drawings. The contractor looked at the drawings and let out a whistle.

“Man, that’s going to take a lot of concrete and rebar,” the man, James Thomas, said.

“I estimate around 852 yards of concrete,” Gary replied. “And, I want harder than normal concrete, too; like what they use to build the freeways.”

“How much did you figure the concrete would cost you?” Jim asked.

“I didn’t have any idea what you got for it here in this area, so I figured \$50 a yard,” Gary said.

You’re off on the price Gary,” Jim said, “And then there’s the excavation, the rebar, and the structural steel. It’s going to run you \$100 a yard installed including materials, plus the price of the structural steel trusses.”

“There isn’t going to be any excavation, Jim. Do you have time to ride down to the building site with me?” Gary asked.

“Not today, no. How about first thing in the morning?” Jim responded.

“8:00 am ok?” Gary asked.

“I was thinking more like 6:00 am,” Jim laughed.

“That’s awfully early for me,” Gary protested, “But I’ll put in a wakeup call and meet you here at 6:00 am.”

Gary went back to the motel and put in a call to the banker in Iowa. He explained, all over again, about the new land, the triple-wide and that he’d applied for a revolving line of credit. Matt at the bank had already heard from the Wells Fargo Manager in Holbrook. He reminded Gary that the provisions of the will didn’t allow him to encumber the trust in any way.

Gary explained that he had offered to secure the line of credit with his Arizona property. Yes, the bank Manager had explained that, Matt said. He recommended that the bank consider granting Gary a line of credit up to \$200,000, but he didn’t know what they planned to do.

Gary called Sharon and brought her up to date. He asked how she was doing and learned that she was getting a cold. Ron had called, too; she told him that she’d filled Ron in on what they had done and were planning on doing.

“What did he have to say about it?” Gary asked.

“Not too much,” Sharon said, “Linda’s mother died and he only had a minute to talk.”

“If you have the chance, call him back and express my sympathies,” Gary said.

"I will," Sharon said, "When do you think you'll hear from Wells Fargo?"

"I have no idea, could be a day or it could be a month," Gary replied. "I think I was low on my estimate of the cost of the basements, too. The contractor said \$100 a yard installed plus the structural steel. That would be \$85 thousand plus the steel. I only estimated \$75,000, including the steel."

"Be careful how much you spend Gary," Sharon said, "Don't get us too far in debt."

"I won't honey," Gary said. "I'll call you tomorrow after I've been to the site with the contractor. Bye."

"Bye," Sharon said and hung up.

Gary tried to call Ron, but when no one picked up by the fourth ring, hung up quickly. He didn't want to leave a message on the message center, it was just too impersonal. He went to the same little Mexican restaurant and had an early dinner. There was one thing about Holbrook he liked; this restaurant beat the hell out of those in Palmdale.

After dinner, he put in his wake up call and watched a little TV. If this was any sample of the TV fare in the area, he decided, he was going to have to put in a dish. Bored with the TV, he took his evening meds and turned in.

The ringing of the phone finally penetrated Gary's dream. The upside of Xanax was that it put you to sleep; the downside was waking up. He answered the empty line before he realized it was his wakeup call. He got the coffee pot brewing the small pot of coffee and made his nature call and took a quick shower.

The coffee was done by the time he finished with the shower and he sat down and drank a cup before he dressed. He ate a sweet roll he got out of the machine, better not take insulin and not eat, and then dressed. He sat back down and finished the coffee while he filled his lungs with tar and nicotine and brought on his first coughing jag of the day. When the coffee was gone, Gary drove over to Jim's shop.

"Morning Gary," Jim said, "Want me to drive or shall I ride with you?"

"Hop in," Gary said.

Jim got in and pulled out a pack of cigarettes. "Do you mind?" he asked.

"I was afraid you didn't smoke Jim," Gary said, "I never saw you light up yesterday and I didn't see any ashtrays."

"Wife runs the office," Jim explained, "And she can't stand the smell of smoke."

"I know what you mean," Gary laughed.

They arrived at the property about 25 minutes later and Gary drove right to the ravine where he planned to put in the basements. They got out and Jim looked the property over.

"Where exactly were you thinking of putting the basement?" Jim asked.

"Right over here," Gary said walking to the edge of the ravine and pointing.

Jim looked at the site for a few minutes than slid down the ravine to check it closer. He used a tape measure and made several measurements. Once he'd climbed back up the wall of the ditch, he turned to Gary.

"From the looks of it Gary," he said, "We're just going to have to add a bit of fill and compact it. Won't take a man with machine more than one-day tops. That changes my estimate some, but it depends on where we get the fill from."

Gary led Jim over to a second ravine about 75 yards south of the first ravine. The second ravine was about the same size as the first and was roughly the same dimensions.

"How about if you dig a trench from the other ravine to this ravine?" Gary asked. "Would that give you enough fill?"

"More than enough Gary," Jim said, "How deep and how wide do you want the trench?"

"I was thinking level with the bottom of the first ravine and about 10' wide," Gary said.

"We won't have to dig more than 25 yards to get the fill we need," Jim said.

"When you figure the estimate Jim, figure it two ways," Gary suggested. "Figure it with just getting the fill and figure it with cutting the trench all the way to the next ravine."

"Sure, I'll be glad to Gary," Jim said. "I figure it will take me about 2 days to get you an estimate. Longer if you need it to the exact penny."

"A rough estimate will do for now Jim," Gary said, "We can figure it to the penny if I go ahead with the deal."

"Suits me," Jim said, "You ready to head back?"

"Yes, I want to check with the bank manager to see if he's approved my line of credit," Gary said. On the way back to Holbrook Gary gave Jim a rough verbal sketch of what he was building. Gary referred to the home as his safe house. Jim got the impression that Gary was a little eccentric, but what the heck, if the money was good, what did he care?

Gary dropped Jim off at the shop and drove to the bank. The manager ushered him into his office.

"I left a message for you at the motel, did you get it?" he asked.

"No, I came straight here from the site," Gary said. "What did you decide?"

"We can extend you a lined of credit equal to 75% of the value of the house and land," the manager answered. That would be 75% of \$275,000 or \$206,250. Normally, we wouldn't go more than 50% of the value, but given your virtually guaranteed income stream, the loan committee told me to go 75%."

"Great," Gary said, "When will the line of credit be available?"

"I just need you to sign some papers and I can make half of the amount available now," the man answered. "As soon as your wife signs, the full amount will be available."

"Can she sign by fax and then sign in person when she gets here?" Gary asked.

"I don't see why not," the manager answered, "Do you have a fax?"

"Yes," Gary said, writing his fax number on a pad lying on the desk.

"I took the liberty of filling out the papers Mr. Olsen," the manager said, "And if you'll fill out a signature card, we will be able to cash checks for you at this branch."

"Don't I need to open a new account?" Gary asked.

"We'll just transfer your account to a new account number at this branch," the manager said. "Your first box of checks will be on us."

"That's great," Gary said, "But I don't even know the address for the new ranch."

"Already checked with the Post Office for you Mr. Olsen, your new address is on the forms," the manager laughed.

Only in America – Chapter 2 – Construction

Gary signed the papers and used his cell phone to call Sharon. He told her to expect a fax in a few minutes. Please sign the papers right away and fax them back. They were approved for a line of credit for about \$206 thousand dollars and all it required was her signature. Sharon received the fax, signed the papers and had them back to the bank in 5 minutes.

“Can you tie that line of credit to my existing account and just transfer everything in say 10 days?” Gary asked.

“No problem,” the manager, Brian said.

“And send the checks to our Palmdale address, if you would,” Gary suggested.

“What’s your next step Mr. Olsen?” Brian asked.

“I’ve got Jim working on an estimate for the basements. But I need to put in a well. Is there a well driller in town?” Gary inquired.

“You’ll have to contact someone in Winslow for that Mr. Olsen,” Brian replied.

“Please call me Gary, Brian,” Gary said, “Is there anyone you’d recommend?”

“Try the yellow pages,” Brian smiled.

Gary drove over to Jim’s shop and caught him as he was just leaving for a construction site.

“Hi Gary, how did it go at the bank?” Jim asked.

“Better than I thought it would Jim.” Gary replied “How fast can you stake the four corners of the foundation?”

“I can do that tomorrow.” Jim said, “Why do you ask?”

“Let me ask you another question Jim,” Gary continued ignoring Jim’s question, “Do you have even a rough estimate yet?”

“I looked at it for a little while Gary while you were at the bank,” Jim answered, “I’m roughly estimating \$95 a yard installed including the structural steel, it could be a little more or a little less, depending upon how much excavating for the ditch we have to do.”

“I estimated \$75 thousand. You’re telling me roughly \$80 thousand, is that right?” Gary asked.

“Closer to \$81 thousand, but yeah, around that,” Jim answered.

“Is a handshake enough to bind the deal for you?” Gary asked. “I’ll sign the contract as soon as you can get me a detailed estimate.”

“Well, yeah,” Jim replied, “You don’t fool around much do you?”

“I’m too old and tired to waste time Jim,” Gary said, “Besides, I don’t plan on learning Arabic.”

“Huh?” Jim responded.

“Never mind Jim,” Gary said, “Who can I get to put in a well for me?”

“Where are you going to put in the well?” Jim asked.

“Right inside the corner of the basement Jim,” Gary answered, “It’s important that you’re accurate when you stake the place out.”

“I’ll put in a stake with a red flag on it when I stake the place out tomorrow,” Jim replied, “If you want, I’ll call a well driller over in Winslow that I know and get him drilling right away. Nice guy, I’ve used him before and he’s pretty reasonable on price.”

“Suits me fine Jim,” Gary said, “The thing is our home is going to be delivered in a little over 3 weeks. How fast can you get the basements in?”

“Not quite that fast,” Jim shook his head, “Maybe four weeks if everything goes right.”

“Can you pull all of the permits and such?” Gary asked.

“That’s part of the job Gary,” Jim replied, “And I’ll have an engineer look at the plans to make sure they will fly before I apply for the permits.”

“Good,” Gary said. “My fax and phone numbers in California are on this piece of paper. Put together the contract and fax it to me. If I can live with it, I’ll sign it and fax it back. If I can’t, I’ll give you a call and we’ll iron out the wrinkles. As far as you’re getting draws on the job, I’ll stop by the bank and ask Brian to issue the draws.”

“For now, I’ll need a check for \$20,000, 25%, to get the ball rolling,” Jim said. “I’ll cover the well cost and add it to my contract.”

“Then I’m headed back to California the first thing in the morning,” Gary said. “My wife isn’t feeling well and there are a million things to get done before we move.”

“When will you be back?” Jim asked.

"I have no idea," Gary said, "But probably before you're done."

"Well then, I'll see you when you get back," Jim said.

Jim was a very reputable contractor and anytime he had a problem with a job, he talked to the client before he proceeded. Holbrook was a small community. In a small town, one didn't get too far by cheating people. The word got around and pretty soon you couldn't get work to save your soul. Jim had seen it happen too many times.

He liked the older man from California, he didn't beat around the bush and hem and haw and try to gouge you for the last nickel. Jim had never quite seen a design like this for a private home either. It would be a challenge to do the job and do it right the first time. Those steel trusses could be a problem, he thought.

Gary stopped by the bank and discussed Jim's draws with Brian. Brian would issue the draws, but only subject to Gary's phone approval. That issue resolved, and it not being even lunchtime yet, Gary decided to drive to Palmdale. He should be able to be home by 1am. Nice thing Arizona being on the same time as California during the summer he thought as he checked out of the motel and headed for the Interstate.

Gary arrived in Palmdale at 12:45am. Sharon was sleeping in the recliner because her head was full and she couldn't breathe. Missy started barking when he pulled up front. By the time he got to the front door, Sharon was up and brewing a fresh pot of coffee. Sharon was miserable, her nose was plugged, her eyes watered and she said he had one of those headaches. Prone to migraine headaches, she usually got either a terrible sinus headache or a migraine whenever she caught cold. It must be bad, she had taken two Vicodin and she hated to take Vicodin.

She had made them both dental, eye and doctor's appointments, assuming it was better to get all of that out of the way before they moved so they would have time to locate practitioners in Holbrook on a non-emergency basis. She'd asked the doctors to make a complete copy of their files. The family doctor's receptionist said that the doctor just wrote a letter. Sharon insisted on complete a copy of the files. When the gal refused, Sharon asked to speak to the doctor. She explained that they were moving to Arizona and needed complete copy of the files. The doctor told her they would be ready when they came in for their next appointment.

The doctor appointments were scheduled for the eye doctor on Thursday in Lancaster and on Friday in Los Angeles. They'd commuted to Los Angeles after a disastrous experience with a doctor in Lancaster. Sharon's employer had switched carriers and they ended up with a doctor in Lancaster who wasn't their cup of tea. The next enrollment period, Sharon switched to a PPO and they returned to their doctor in Northridge. Gary was a little funny about who he saw for medical and dental care. He'd been going to the same people since they'd moved to California back in 1982.

They got the family physician to write one-year prescriptions for all of their drugs. The

receptionist tried to hold Sharon up for fifteen cents a page for the copies of their records and Sharon had raised her voice. The doctor came out and told the receptionist the copies were free, the Olsen's were his original patients and had been with the office from before he'd bought the practice. Gary just stayed out of it. When Sharon raised her voice, she was angry and when Sharon was angry, one couldn't reason with her. If he said anything, she'd be angry with him for 3 days.

They did the dentist bit at 1pm and Gary stopped to see his cardiologist at 3:15. There wasn't anything wrong with his heart, but with the diabetes, it didn't hurt to have a treadmill once a year. This was especially true since they were moving to the sticks. Who knew what they had in Holbrook for medical facilities?

On the way home, after Sharon had bent his ear about the receptionist, Gary brought up the subject of their furniture. A lot of it was old. He suggested that they move the oak and discard the sofa and living room chairs plus the mattresses and box springs. They had Serta and he wanted Sealy. Serta was softer than Sealy, but once he got to sleep on the Sealy, he slept like a baby.

Sharon agreed with him and when she got home, called the mover. The load would be smaller than the estimate, she told them. That turned out pretty good; movers were notorious for underestimating the weight of a load. With all of the furniture they discarded, the load actually came in at the estimate.

Gary and Sharon took Ron and Linda out to dinner at Outback. Gary did his best to try and convince Ron to move to Holbrook, but Ron was dead set on moving to where his brother, Robert, lived in New Mexico. Gary asked Ron if he would at least stop by the next time he went to visit Robert. Now that, he could do, he said. Then, Ron started in giving Gary hell for moving to Arizona. He'd just spent \$100 to buy a membership for the shooting range down Angeles Crest and now he wouldn't have anyone to shoot with. Gary told Ron to bring his guns when he came by; he was building a 1,000-yard range.

The packers showed up the next day and had them packed by noon. Sharon had already made an appointment with the man who hauled their trash and they had him pick up the mattresses, box springs, sofa and chairs. The phone was shutoff. The utilities were being shut down the next day. They spent the night at Days Inn and were at the house waiting for the movers the next morning. The minute the movers left, Gary pointed the car towards Holbrook and took off.

Their possessions would be stored until they needed them. Back in 1982, when they'd moved to California from Davenport, they drove to California in 4 days. When they got there, they had stayed in the Holiday Inn. The next morning, when they had arrived at their new apartment, the mover was sitting out front. The truck had 4 families' possessions on it when it left their mobile home in Davenport. They figured that they would beat the truck to California, but theirs were the only possessions on the truck. The driver had beaten them to California, unloaded the other 3 loads and had to wait a day for

them to arrive. And, he'd charged them for downtime.

Sharon was only back to about 85% and rather than fuel her discomfort, Gary stopped in Flagstaff for the night and got a non-smoking room. He could go outside for one night to have his cigarettes. They were in Holbrook the next day and Gary checked them into a motel, got Sharon settled and headed for the ranch. The three sections of the mobile home were sitting on the property. They had been delivered earlier that morning. Jim was directing the drivers where to set their loads.

"Hey Jim, we made it," Gary called to Jim.

"Hi Gary," Jim said, "You'd better get on your cell phone and call the installers, we finished ahead of schedule."

Gary called back to Lancaster and advised the Fleetwood dealer to have the installers start assembly of the triple-wide. The soonest they could do it, he was told, was 3 days. He went ahead and made the installation appointment and got with Jim.

"Before you go any further Jim, we need to get the tanks, furnace, hot water heater and generator installed," Gary explained. "I thought that I'd have more time than this to get everything around."

"What do you have coming?" Jim asked.

"I have a Cummins RS 30 propane generator, a steam heating system, a tankless hot water heater, a 30,000 gallon propane tank and a 10,000 gallon water tank on order," Gary responded. "I would have thought they'd all be here by now. The output of the generator has to be derated 4% for every 1,000' above 500'. Basically, it's only a 24kw unit."

"Your home already has a hot water heater and furnace," Jim exclaimed.

"I know," Gary said, but I have to heat and cool the subbasement and basement. Did you put in the pipes like I specified?"

"Yes of course," Jim laughed, "It's not only built to your specs, it's been upgraded a little. Remember the engineer I mentioned?"

"Yes I do," Gary said, "What did he change?"

"The rebar for one thing," Jim replied, "Suggested we put in a core of #6 and flankers of #4. That subbasement could take a direct hit from anything short of an a-bomb. The pipes are in the walls just as you specified. You haven't said how you intend to connect the basement to the subbasement, though."

"I left that out intentionally," Gary responded, "I wanted to make sure everything was in

place in the subbasement before we closed it in.”

“I can see why,” Jim laughed. “That also explains why the entrance to the subbasement is so large. What are you going to do, put in a bank vault door?”

“Exactly,” Gary said.

“I was kidding,” Jim said, surprised.

“I’m not,” Gary smiled. “The PT series exterior armored doors are vertical hanging doors designed for concrete shelters. They have been designed and tested by Andair AG in Andelfingen, Switzerland according to the directives of the Swiss Federal Office of Civil Defense. They are rated at approximately 1 bar (15 psi). I’m putting in a PTO double door, which is 240cm. X 210cm. X 20 cm. thick. It will just fit in the opening you left.”

“Where on God’s Green Earth did you ever find something like that?” Jim asked.

“A place up in Utah called Utah Shelter Systems,” Gary explained. “They also sell the Andair VA ventilating system designed for safe rooms and blast and fallout shelters. It brings breathable air to shelter occupants and exhausts carbon dioxide. It produces a slight positive overpressure eliminating leaks of gases and air intruding from the outside.

“The optional gas filter protects against the admission of radiation, dust, and war gases. This system comes complete with debris and splinters guards, and the anchor system protects the entire installation against the effects of shock waves associated with weapons effects and earthquakes. The blast valves protect occupants against high overpressures and hot vapors which will intrude into all unprotected openings from the outside in the event of a nearby blast.”

“Darn, Gary,” Jim exclaimed, “You really are building a bomb shelter aren’t you?”

“You got that right partner,” Gary smiled, “What do you think of my little project so far?”

“To tell you the truth, I just thought you were a little eccentric,” Jim laughed, “But you’ve managed to convince me that you’re certifiable. I mean hell, I can understand a storm shelter, they’re never a bad idea, but a bomb shelter with over 27 thousand cubic feet and, for only two people? That is nuts!”

“Who said it was only for 2 people?” Gary asked. “I didn’t.”

“Maybe you should explain it to me,” Jim said, eyebrows raised.

“Bush went into Afghanistan and now he’s starting a war with Iraq,” Gary explained. “How long do you think it will be before those people have had enough of the US and our policing the world before they come back here and start flying more airplanes into

buildings or start blowing up trains and bridges? How long before they sneak some of those missing Russian suitcase nukes into the country and start blowing our cities to hell? I'm sure that you don't know because I sure as hell don't know. What I saved on putting in a triple wide instead of building a regular home paid for this shelter."

"You've got me there Gary," Jim admitted, "But why so big?"

"Holbrook is our home now Jim," Gary went on, "I'm trying to get my best friend to build an identical home at the other end of the trench you started and I plan to connect the two shelters with a tunnel."

"You mean that there are two of you?" Jim almost choked.

"If I can talk my friend Ron and his wife Linda into moving here, yes, there will be two of us," Gary laughed. "Just think you'll get to build another \$80-\$90 thousand dollar basement."

Thinking that he'd maybe gone a little too far, Jim began to back track. "That would be great Gary, I didn't mean anything by that certifiable crack."

"You meant every word of it Jim, but relax, I'm not offended," Gary continued. "Who knows, maybe you'll end up in this shelter someday thanking God there was a crackpot like me around."

"I sure hope that it never comes to that Gary," Jim replied.

"That makes two of us, my friend," Gary assured him. "Look, I've got to get back to the motel and start checking up on all the stuff I have ordered. The wife isn't feeling too well either; she's just getting over a cold and this move has been hard on her."

"Can't be any harder on her than living with a nut like you," Jim thought. "Ok, we're done here, if you need anything, let me know. Will you be by tomorrow to settle up on the contract?"

"Tomorrow or the day after for sure," Gary said, "Want to get the check and cash it before they lock me up, I'll bet."

"Now Gary, you took what I said all wrong," Jim began.

"Man, you're easy to get to," Gary laughed, "You're almost as much fun as Ron."

Gary drove back to the motel. Sharon was sleeping so he went to a restaurant and got a cup of coffee. When he got back to the room, Sharon was awake.

"How did it go down at the ranch, dear?" she asked.

“The basement project is completed Sharon,” he said, “And the triple wide is sitting there ready to be assembled. I’ve got to make some phone calls and see what the holdup is on the equipment for the subbasement.”

“I’m going back to sleep,” she said, “Don’t worry, your phone calls won’t bother me a bit.”

Gary got on the phone and began to follow up on the equipment for the shelter. Everything, it turned out was in transit and would be there in the next day or two. He called Jim’s office to see if Jim was back from the ranch. Jim had gotten back a half-hour before and could see him now if he wanted. Gary drove to Jim’s shop and settled into a chair in Jim’s office.

“Jim, I know that you’re a concrete contractor,” Gary said, “But can you tell me where I can hire some labor to move the equipment into the subbasement?”

“What do you need Gary, manual labor to move the stuff into the shelter?” Jim asked.

“Exactly,” Gary said, “And a good plumber and electrician to install everything.”

“As far as the plumber and electrician go, I can recommend some good people,” Jim said. “When will the equipment be here?”

“I just spent an hour on the phone Jim,” Gary explained, “Everything is in transit, so it should start arriving tomorrow.”

“I don’t have another job until the first of the week,” Jim explained, “So it would help me if you had some work for my day laborers.”

“I’ll go you one better Jim,” Gary said, “Why don’t you get an excavator out there and finish the trench to the other ravine? And since you don’t have another job, do you want to build the 10’x10’x10’ tunnel to the other ravine?”

“We can do the first 25 yards Gary,” Jim smiled, “But we won’t be able to build the whole thing this week.”

“That’s ok Jim,” Gary acknowledged, “Put in the first 25 yards and excavate as much soil as you can. Whenever you have some down time, you can come back and work on it some more.”

“You’ve got yourself a deal Gary,” Jim smiled even bigger.

“Now, how much do I owe you for what you’ve done so far?” Gary asked.

Jim gave Gary the number and Gary wrote the first check on his Holbrook branch checking account. It was less than he thought it would be. They visited for a while long-

er and Gary explained what he knew about how the blast door had to be installed. Since much of the work involved concrete work, Jim agreed to install the door when the time came. Gary also brought up the subject of the stairwell between the basement and the subbasement. Jim had a week open in about 6 weeks, so Gary booked the time for the project.

Gary spent each of the next three days at the ranch, accepting the deliveries of his equipment and watching their new home going together. The sections slid onto the trusses without difficulty and they were connecting the sections by the second day. On the third day they completed the work on the inside. Gary went into the house and looked around after they had handed him the keys and left.

They had a large master bedroom, a fair sized guest room and two smaller bedrooms that Sharon and he could use for a sewing room and office. Gary called Jim earlier in the day and Jim had sent a crew out to move the equipment into the subbasement. Gary planned to set the equipment into place, and then erect the interior walls. There was also the matter of having a carpenter cut a hole in the floor of the home and installing the stairway to the basement to consider. Gary looked around but couldn't find an ideal spot to put the stairway.

When he got back to the motel, Sharon was feeling much better. The movers were delivering their furniture the next day and she would be glad to get out of the motel. Gary told her not so fast, they didn't have any mattresses or living room furniture. Yes they did she told him; she'd spent some time at the local furniture store and had picked out the Sealy mattresses and some new living room furniture. Gary figured that she must have been feeling better if she were up to shopping.

They got an early start the next morning, stopping by a market and picking up a few fresh food items for lunch and supper. When they arrived at the home at 7:00am, the moving truck was parked out front.

"That figures Sharon," Gary laughed, "If we'd have been here at 6am, they wouldn't have arrived until noon."

It didn't take the movers very long to unload the truck. They stacked the boxes and set the furniture where Sharon directed. Because they had prepaid the move based on the estimate, and because they had moved less than the moving company had expected, they turned out owing only a couple of hundred dollars plus the storage fees. Sharon paid the men and set about unpacking her kitchen.

Jim had gotten a plumber and electrician out there that day and Gary spent his time divided between showing them how he wanted things done in the basement and sub-basement and moving boxes for Sharon. By the end of the day, Sharon had their kitchen unpacked and was starting in on the bathrooms. The furniture company delivered their new living room furniture and mattresses and even erected their beds for them. They were exhausted and rather than asking Sharon to cook dinner, Gary offered to

drive them up to Holbrook for a meal.

The plumber turned out to be the same man Jim had used to set the septic tank and field for Gary. Jim had also had Arizona Public Service run power lines into the property. He had laid conduit in the bottom of the ravine for the lines. They came into the sub-basement through the floor, and went to an automatic transfer switch. Jim had actually only needed to excavate 25 feet of the trench to get the fill to level the site. He had excavated 25 yards and used the extra fill to partially fill in the ravine over the conduit and septic system.

The first time Gary tasted the water from their well, he had been extremely disappointed. The stuff was hard enough to drive nails. He called a company in Flagstaff and they installed a water purification system between the tank and the rest of the house. Although he wanted a water purification system, he had hoped it wouldn't be necessary and hadn't planned on the expense. He dug a little deeper into their credit line for that project.

It took Gary and Sharon about two weeks to get settled in the new home. During that time, the plumber had finished the plumbing and the electrician had gone as far as he could until the interior walls were erected in the subbasement. They had received another large monthly distribution from the trust and Gary paid down the line of credit balance \$40 thousand dollars. He kept back \$12 thousand for unexpected problems and the next phase of the project.

The electrician had left temporary lighting in the basement and subbasement and Gary measured and re-measured, eventually drawing chalk lines on the floor where he wanted the walls. He had installed two separate adjoining bathrooms in the subbasement, each with a sink, stool and shower. He marked these as two separate rooms and laid out one bedroom for each bathroom and two large bunkrooms, a kitchen and dining area, a large storage room and a recreation room. The final areas were the utilities room and the storage room. When he was done, he went looking for Jim.

Jim had excavated the remaining 50 yards to the other ravine to a depth of 20 feet and they had completed the first 25 yards of tunnel. They used the excavated dirt to backfill over the completed tunnel. The remainder was piled to backfill the rest of the tunnel. Any excess would be used to add fill over the septic field.

Gary wanted Jim to complete the trench while they completed connecting the basement and subbasement. Sharon didn't want a hole cut in her floor for a stairwell and Gary decided that the shaft connecting the subbasement to the basement had to be extended all the way to the surface. This added a bit of expense, but nothing unmanageable. The reason for his trip to see Jim was to change the plans, discuss finishing the trench and to get advice on a good carpenter.

Only in America – Chapter 3 – Progress

The first thing Jim did was to try and talk Gary out of extending the shaft connecting the basement to the subbasement all of the way to the surface.

“I thought you were pretty smart Gary,” Jim said, “But that just doesn’t make any sense. If you extend the stairwell all the way to the surface, you’ll have to add another blast door and you’ll be waiving a red flag that you have a shelter. Let my carpenter look at your house. I’m sure that he can put in a stairwell that will please you and your wife.”

“Hey man, that’s good enough for me,” Gary said, “The problem will be convincing Sharon.”

“It will be 4 weeks before we can get back out there to do the stairwell,” Jim said, “We’re falling a little behind.”

“That’s when you had it scheduled, so I don’t see it will be any problem,” Gary replied. “Will you be able to finish excavating the trench?”

“Yes, but I don’t know how much tunnel we can get built in one week with the other work were doing for you,” Jim grimaced.

“No problem,” Gary said, “Although I hope you can get it done before winter.”

“I have time in September,” Jim said, “I’ll mark it in.”

“Now, about that carpenter,” Gary asked, “Is he pretty good?”

“The best in the area and he’s fair, too,” Jim confirmed.

“Does he work alone or does he have help?” Gary asked, “I’m not up to much helping.”

“He has 2 men that work with him Gary,” Jim replied, “And they’re dang good workers, too. His name is Jim Littletree.”

“Ok, anytime after 7am is ok with me,” Gary said, “The wife and I have a soft spot for Native Americans so we look forward to having him work with us on this project. Hell, him being an Indian practically assures she’ll agree with anything he suggests for a basement stairway.”

The next morning, promptly at 7, the doorbell rang. Gary answered the door and a tall handsome man with a long ponytail was standing there.

“Good morning, you must be Jim Littletree,” Gary said.

“Yes sir and you are Gary Olsen?” Jim asked.

“That I am, do you want to come in for coffee or do you want to get right to it?” Gary asked.

“I’m not being paid to drink coffee, so if it’s all right with you, let’s get started Mr. Olsen,” Jim said.

“I be obliged if you’d just call me Gary, Jim, Mr. Olsen was my father,” Gary laughed. “Let’s go around to the side and slide down the ravine.”

They walked over to the ravine and Jim looked at the 40’ slope.

“Gary, I think we had better start by building a temporary stairway,” Jim suggested, “Otherwise, someone is going to fall and get hurt.”

“Fine by me, but are you willing to risk it once so you can get an estimate of the lumber you’re going to need?” Gary asked.

“Sure, let’s do it,” Jim laughed.

Gary walked Jim through the entire subbasement, showing him the chalk lines on the floor and explaining that he wanted the walls insulated to cut down on noise. Jim made some measurements and wrote them down. When they were done, Jim asked Gary if he could use the kitchen table to figure out the bill of materials. Gary and he climbed back up the slope and they sat down at the kitchen table.

“Do you want to keep the high ceiling or put in a drop ceiling?” Jim asked.

“What would you recommend Jim?” Gary countered.

“It’s six of one and a half dozen of the other,” Jim said, “We can either put furring strips on the trusses and attach drywall or put in the drop ceiling. The cost will be about the same. I’d recommend the drop ceiling, but at 9’ rather than 8’.”

“Why’s that?” Gary asked.

“You’re putting in the two bunkrooms and a 9’ ceiling will let you go higher with the bunks,” Jim said, “Of course if anyone falls out of one, they’re going to bust their back-side pretty good.”

“Let’s do the 9’ ceiling Jim,” Gary said, “I’m planning on putting in some the military surplus 39” wide pipe style military bunks.”

“Ok. Well it looks like here’s what I’ll need to start Gary,” Jim said handed Gary a list.

Gary briefly scanned the list. “What about the drywall and insulation Jim, should we or-

der everything at once?"

They have to order the drywall Gary since you want $\frac{3}{4}$ " instead of $\frac{5}{8}$," Jim replied, "Besides, It will just get in the way. I'll order it but have them hold delivery until we need it. You can get the electrician to wire the walls after we get the framing in and we're working on the basement."

"Jim, I don't see any 2"x6"s on the list," Gary said, "I'd prefer to put in 2"x6" lumber on the outside walls so we can shoot in some foam and upgrade the insulation."

"You didn't say anything about using the Farnsworth system," Jim replied.

"Well if you know the name of the system, you know where I got the idea," Gary smiled, "Did you work for them?"

"For a while, yes," Jim replied, "But I'm not Mormon and it didn't work out."

"No problem. Adjust your bill of materials and order accordingly," Gary suggested.

"They are going to want cash on delivery," Jim said.

"Oh really, which lumberyard are you going to use?" Gary asked.

"There's only one Gary," Jim said.

"You call the order in and I'll take care of the financing, ok?" Gary said.

"Suits me boss," Jim laughed.

Gary gave Brian a call. Could Brian give the lumberyard a call and square things with them? He didn't want to write a lot of checks, set them up on a draw, if necessary. Brian told him he would take care of it.

Jim placed the order with the lumberyard and asked them when it would be delivered. It would be two days they told him. Jim mentioned this to Gary. Gary asked Jim for the phone. Jim handed it over and Gary asked to speak to the manager or owner, whatever. The owner got on the phone and identified himself.

"This is Gary Olsen," Gary said, "Did Brian from the bank call you about me?"

"Yes he did Mr. Olsen, what can I do to help you?" the man asked.

"My carpenter just placed a large order and he was told it was going to take two days to deliver it," Gary said, "Is there some problem that I should know of?"

"Is Jim Littletree working for you, Mr. Olsen?" the man asked.

“That’s right,” Gary said, “I can order my building materials from Winslow if you’d prefer, it’s up to you.”

“Oh no Mr. Olsen, it’s a simple misunderstanding,” the owner replied, “You’ll have your materials in three hours, tops.”

“Ok, thanks,” Gary said and hung up the phone.

“Ok Jim what’s going on here?” Gary asked.

“The owner’s daughter married an Indian,” Jim explained, “He treats all of us that way.”

“Not anymore,” Gary said, “I’ll have a talk with him when I go to town later today.”

“Oh, really?” Jim said, “Well good luck, Gary. I’ll call my guys and have them here in 2 hours.”

A lumber truck pulled in 2½ hours later. The driver unloaded the lumber with a forklift and when he was done, brought the invoice over to Gary. He said, “This is COD, I need...”

Gary cut him off right there, “Look again driver.”

The driver looked at the invoice and got a strange look on his face. “You’re right Mr. Olsen, sorry. Sign here please.”

“You get started on the stairs Jim,” Gary said, “I have to make a run to town.”

Gary got in his beater and headed to Holbrook. He went straight to the lumberyard and asked to speak to the owner. The man looked up and said, “I’m the owner, what can I do for you?”

“I’m Gary Olsen,” Gary said, “Could we speak in private?”

The owner smiled, “That’s not necessary Mr. Olsen, anything you have to say to me, you can say right here.”

Gary pulled out the invoice for the delivery he signed for a half hour earlier.

“If that’s the way you want it,” he said, “Fine by me.”

Gary wrote out a check for the amount of the invoice and handed it to the man.

“You can cancel the other things I have on order mister,” Gary said.

“Just a minute Mr. Olsen,” the owner said, “I’m sure we can work this out.”

“I gave you that chance mister,” Gary said, “You declined. If you want forgiveness, you best talk to God; forgiveness is his business, not mine.”

The owner followed Gary out to his car. “Mr. Olsen, can we talk about this, please?”

“Ok, everyone is entitled to ONE mistake,” Gary replied, “What do you have to say for yourself.”

“I told you on the phone it was a misunderstanding.” The owner protested.

“The misunderstanding was that you thought the customer was an Indian, not a white man, right?”

“Well, yeah,” the owner admitted.

“Mister, what you do in your private life is none of my business,” Gary said, “But you are a businessman and one customer’s money is just as good as another’s. Do you get my drift, or do I have to spell it out for you?”

“Mr. Olsen, you don’t understand,” the owner protested.

“Oh, I understand perfectly mister,” Gary said, “I was probably the worst redneck you ever saw. My daughter married a black man. I didn’t like it and still don’t, but what she decided was none of my business. I didn’t go around messing with black people because of my daughter’s decision. Now, do you understand me mister?”

“I guess I’ve let my personal life interfere in my business Olsen,” the owner said, “If I work on that, can I have your business back?”

“Yes you can. Right up until I hear that you pulled the same crap on another Indian,” Gary said. “I’m not telling you that you have to change, that’s none of my business, but who I chose to do with business with is my business.”

“I’ll deliver the order when it comes in Mr. Olsen,” the owner said.

“Fine, but remember what I said, ok?” Gary responded.

“Yeah, ok,” the owner replied dejectedly.

Gary got back in his beater and drove back to the ranch. He walked over to Jim.

“Have a word with you Jim?” he asked. “I had a talk with the man. First time you hear of him holding up an order because the customer is an Indian, you let me know, ok?”

“Sure thing Gary,” Jim said. “What did you say to him?”

“Oh nothing much,” Gary said, “Just gave him an object lesson.” Gary turned and walked off.

When Gary got into the house Sharon told him that Jim had called and wanted him to call back. They’d had phone service from when they’d moved into the house. The house came pre-wired for phone and Jim had had the phone company lay a conduit with a 25 pair cable in the ravine next to the electrical conduit. The phone company had come in and pulled cables from a distribution panel they’d erected in the subbasement through the pipes in the walls to the basement and through the trusses to the phone junction box Gary asked Fleetwood to install on the bottom of the house.

“Jim, this is Gary Olsen, what can I do for you?” Gary asked.

“There are two things I’d like to talk to you about Gary,” Jim said. “First, I had a job scheduled for my earth moving equipment starting tomorrow. I just found out this morning that their financing fell through and I have to defer the job. So, I can have my earth moving equipment out your way tomorrow if that’s ok.”

“That would be great Jim, you can finish the trench,” Gary said.

“Actually Gary, the 10-day forecast is for rain in about 9 to 10 days,” Jim added, “What happens if you have one of those flash floods in the area and a gully washer comes down that ravine? There is a good reason why that ravine was there in the first place.”

“I had planned for that Jim,” Gary explained, “After we finished connecting the basement and the subbasement, I had intended to get you or someone to fill in the ravine and erect a earthen cofferdam to divert the runoff into that third ravine about 200 yards south of the one the house is in.”

“I’d suggest you rearrange your priorities Gary,” Jim advised, “Now would be a good time to put in that cofferdam. Otherwise, your entire subbasement could get filled with water.”

“Hell, if now’s the time to do it,” Gary said, “Go for it.”

Jim and a crew were there bright and early the next morning. Jim wanted to knock down the hill next to the ravine that the house set in to get the fill for the cofferdam. Gary asked him if they could get the dirt anywhere else, he had long-term plans for that hill. The two of them got into Jim’s pickup and they drove around the section looking for alternative sources of dirt. Jim pointed out some small hills on the west side of the section.

“We can knock down those hills and use the dirt for the cofferdam Gary,” he suggested. “We can also use the rock to start filling in the ravine. That will be a lot of earth moving,”

Jim mentioned, "It won't come cheap."

"Jim, it's just like the Fram oil filter commercials," Gary laughed, "You can pay me now or pay me later. Later is always more expensive."

Jim immediately got the crew working. They began to erect the cofferdam and as they came to rock, hauled it to the head of the ravine and began to fill it in.

"What are they doing dear?" Sharon asked.

"It's supposed to rain next week and Jim suggested that we do the cofferdam now," Gary told her.

"That's nice dear," Sharon said and went back to her quilting.

Gary walked down the temporary stairway and went into the shelter to see how Jim and his crew were coming along.

"Wow!" Gary said, "You fellas are fast. I thought that this framing would take a lot longer."

"Gary," Jim Littletree said, "The framing is the easy part. The drop ceiling, shooting the insulation and rolling in the insulation in the interior walls will take longer."

"When will you be done framing down here?" Gary asked.

"Couple of more days," Littletree answered. "Lumberyard called. Your drywall is in. I told them to hold it until we called."

"That's a good idea Jim," Gary acknowledged. "Did you work out something with Sharon about the stairs to the basement?"

"Yes. Your wife is really nice to work with Gary," Littletree responded. "You want us to start on the stairs when we finish framing the subbasement?"

"Sure Jim," Gary replied, "And well you're at it why don't you Farnsworth the basement?"

"Ok, sure," Littletree responded, "You want to call the lumberyard for the materials?"

"No. I want you to do it. You know what you'll need," Gary said, "And I want to see if that guy has changed his ways at all."

"It won't mean much Gary," Jim laughed, "He knows I'm working for you."

"True," Gary said, "But he didn't call me to say the drywall was in did he? He called you."

Another thing while I'm thinking about it. Build a temporary cover for the subbasement door to keep the rain out."

Gary went back upstairs and told Sharon they would be starting the basement stairs soon. She put down her quilting and said she wanted to talk to him about something. It seems that Jim had mentioned that his wife had lost her job housekeeping at the motel. She was cleaning houses to make ends meet. Did Gary object to her hiring Jim's wife to come in 2 days a week and clean the house? Once the basement stairwell was in, there would be a lot more dust and dirt to contend with, she said.

"Two days a week?" Gary asked. "It shouldn't take more than one day a week to clean the house."

"Probably not dear," Sharon admitted, "But she could help with the laundry, change the beds and do other things. She has Mondays and Fridays open."

"Ok, you could use the help and the schedule is perfect," he said.

"I almost forgot," Sharon said, "Ron called. He and Linda are coming this way to see Bob. They'll be here a week from Saturday around noon."

"You'd better get a hold of Jim's wife and have her start Friday, then," Gary suggested.

"Ok dear," Sharon replied. She'd already talked to Jim's wife Maria and she would be starting Friday. But, she knew to let Gary think that he'd had a part in the decision. Gary could be a Crusty Old Curmudgeon at times. But as long as he thought he was in charge, she could manage him.

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About the Crusty Old Curmudgeon bit. A reader had jokingly called TOM a Crusty Old Curmudgeon. In a phone call to TOM, he referred to the movie *The Three Amigos*. Some people just can't take a joke.

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A delivery truck from the lumberyard showed up 4 hours later. The driver stacked the lumber and came to the house for Gary to sign for the lumber. Littletree and his crew stopped framing in the subbasement and built a temporary ramp down to the basement entrance. They then hauled the lumber and supplies into the basement. As he was leaving that day, Littletree mentioned to Gary that his wife had told him the night before that she was going to be working for them on Mondays and Fridays. Gary wasn't too surprised at the news. Sharon was great at manipulating him.

Jim Thomas and his crew finished up the cofferdam in 8 days. It was 10' across at the base and 4' high. It extended from well before the ravine all the way to the third ravine.

It had a rock core, was overlaid with dirt and had a facing made out of flat rocks. Any runoff hitting it would be channeled into the third ravine. With two extra days to spare, Thomas had his men put in the footings for the stairwell and they mounted the blast door. Littletree moved the subbasement cover up one floor and used it as a cover for the basement entrance on the end of the house.

Maria was very industrious. She had the home cleaned up in 6 hours flat and even prepared them dinner. The food rivaled the food at the Mexican restaurant that Gary was becoming fond of. Jim had the stairwell in and trimmed out. There really hadn't been a choice about where to put the stairwell, when Gary had told the dealer back in Lancaster that they were setting the home over a basement, the dealer had Fleetwood put in a removable support and build the frame for where the stairwell would go.

Littletree had discovered the Fleetwood modification and merely had to pull up the carpet and unbolt the removable floor section. Most of the work had involved building an enclosed staircase in the basement to contain the stairs. It took them 2 days start to finish, to have the staircase roughed in, the carpet reinstalled and the railings around the staircase erected. When he had finished, the home looked like it came from the factory with the staircase already installed.

Gary ordered a 21ft³ upright and two 25ft³ chest deep freezers from Sears. He needed to get the chests in before the stairwell was enclosed. The upright and a new washer dryer went into the laundry room. He wondered if he had forgotten anything else, but when he talked it over with Sharon, they decided that nothing significant had been overlooked.

Anxious to stock the freezer, Gary got on the Internet and looked for the nearest Costco store. The only Costco stores in Arizona were in the Phoenix area. When he mentioned his predicament to Jim Thomas, Jim told him where he could get either a side of beef or the whole steer butchered, cut and wrapped. The same man could order pork cuts by the box from a meat processor.

Gary and Sharon talked it over and ordered a side of beef and a box of pork loins. The meat was double wrapped, first in plastic, and then in the plastic lined Kraft paper. It wasn't likely to freezer burn in the time they would take to get to it.

Maria had the house fairly shining. At the end of the day on Friday, Gary sat down and wrote checks for Thomas, Littletree and Maria. Gary was looking forward to Ron and Linda's visit tomorrow. He put the 2 empty 5-gallon propane tanks in the back of the beater. First thing in the morning, he had to drive to Holbrook and pickup some propane.

The next morning while he was in Holbrook filling the propane tanks, Gary noticed a used Dodge pickup that really caught his eye. He drove over to Tate's Auto Center and parked the beater. He hadn't made it 50' feet down the aisle of pickups before a salesman was in his face. The man asked if he could help and Gary told him he was just

looking. The salesman backed off and just walked along. Gary spotted a pickup he really liked. He looked at the price sticker and then inside.

"Would you like to test drive the truck?" the salesman asked.

"Not particularly," Gary responded. "What year is it and what does it have for an engine?"

"It's a 1998 and a Cummins 6BT inline six turbo diesel. It's the quad cab with the long box and has dual tires on the rear. It has a six-speed-manual gearbox and the 4WD system can be engaged using the transfer case on the floor," the salesman explained.

"How much will you give me for my old beater?" Gary asked leading the salesman over to their Skylark.

"Not much, I'm afraid," the salesman said, "That car's pretty old. If it runs good, you'd be better off just keeping it."

"Well ok, but how do I get both vehicles home?" Gary said, "Can't drive two cars at once."

"Oh, we'd be more than happy to deliver it," the salesman smiled, sensing a possible sale.

"Ok. I'll take it," Gary said, "How much you going to give me off for cash?"

"Cash or credit is all the same to us sir," the salesman said, "Nothing."

"Sorry I bothered you," Gary said and started to get into the Skylark.

"Just a minute sir," the salesman panicked, "I'm sure my sales manager could do something for you."

"That's more like it kid," Gary said and followed the salesman into the salesroom.

Gary introduced himself to the sales manager. The man gave Gary an odd look.

"Where have I heard that name?" he asked.

"Maybe at the bank or the lumberyard or around town," Gary said, "We just moved here from California."

"You're the man who put up that new home 20 miles from town aren't you?" the sales manager said.

"One and the same," Gary said, "What's your bottom dollar on that truck?"

The sales manager gave Gary a number. Gary thought about it a minute and started to get up.

“Really Mr. Olsen,” the sales manager said, “That’s the best I can do for you.”

“Bull,” Gary said, “How long has that truck been sitting on your lot?”

“A while,” the sales manager admitted.

“Between what you allowed on the trade-in and your asking price, you have room to negotiate,” Gary said. “I think you can do better than that.”

Gary had the man there. The vehicle had been sitting on the lot for 5 months. It was just too high end for the average buyer.

“Tell you what Mr. Olsen, I’ll cut the price by \$1,000, but that’s absolutely the best I can do,” the sales manager offered.

“You just sold yourself a pickup mister,” Gary said, “How long to get it ready to go?”

“It’s ready to go now,” the sales manager said, “We thought we had it sold once before and prepped it for the customer. But, his financing fell through.”

Gary pulled out his checkbook, “What’s the bottom line with tax and license and all the other crap?”

“Of course you’ll want finish protection and...” the sales manager began.

“Mister, I just want the truck as it sits; I believe in function over form,” Gary cut him off.

The sales manager gave up. At least they had gotten rid of the dog. He gave Gary a number after a few minutes of calculation and Gary wrote him a check. They pulled the pickup around back, filled the tank and gave it a quick wash while the sales manager was making the calculation. The sales manager handed Gary the keys and told him they’d follow him back to his home with the pickup. Gary told them they’d follow him back home in the beater, he wanted to test drive his new truck now, thank you very much.

The little caravan started out for the ranch, Gary in the lead, the Skylark in the middle and the Courtesy Van bringing up the rear.

Only in America – Chapter 4 – Ronald McDonald

Gary hadn't been home an hour when Ron and Linda pulled in.

"Ronald McDonald, you're as ugly as ever," Gary said laughing, "Did you have any trouble finding the place?"

"A little, Butthole," Ron greeted him, "But when I saw the sign that said, 'You're Here,' I knew we'd found the place. Only a Crusty old SOB like you would put up a sign that says, 'You're Here.'"

Linda greeted Sharon and the two of them went into the house. They had heard enough of the two men's' antics to last them a lifetime. Ron noticed the new Dodge Ram.

"How long have you had the truck?" he asked.

"About an hour partner," Gary replied.

"I knew it had to be something like that," Ron admitted, "You don't have a rifle rack in the back window yet."

"I don't even have a rifle to put in a rack," Gary confided.

"What? Machine Gun Olsen's been in Arizona for more than a whole day and doesn't have an M-16?" Ron kidded.

"It's a matter of priorities, my friend," Gary said, "Just as soon as we get the subbasement wrapped up, I'll be at the gun store. Come on. Let me give you the grand tour."

Gary and Ron descended the stairs to the subbasement. There was the blast door just like Gary always said he'd planned to put in. Gary led Ron around the 2,736 square foot shelter. Ron took careful note of the entire facility. He'd had a hand, indirectly, in planning the place. Gary didn't know squat about propane and he'd been in charge of designing and installing propane installations for years. He saw that Gary had followed his advice precisely.

The kitchen was all laid out, but there were no appliances or counters. Gary explained that that would all come within the next three weeks; everything had to be in before they put in the stair well. He'd ordered two 4-burner Viking cook tops, ovens and stainless steel counters. He even had a Frymaster 2-well deep fat fryer on order as well as a pizza oven. Gary and he had one thing in common, they both liked to go first class.

Ron asked Gary where the tunnel led.

"The goes to your house, my friend," Gary said.

"I've told you that I'm moving to New Mexico Gar-bear," Ron insisted.

"Whatever," Gary replied.

Sharon was upstairs working on Linda. She showed Linda all the space you could get for \$115 thousand. The walls were covered with drywall and could be purchased with a textured finish or smooth to be wall papered. The carpet was an upgrade and fairly luxurious. The kitchen wasn't the usual galley kitchen found in most modular housing, either. Linda liked the house and what Sharon had done with it.

Gary took Ron over to the cofferdam they had put in. He explained that he had intended to put it in later, but his contractor said it was going to rain this weekend and had fairly insisted that they get it in right away. When they got back to the house, Gary took Ron on a tour of the basement. There wasn't much to see, Gary didn't have the 50' indoor range put in yet or anything. The walls were furred out with the 2"x6"s but the foam insulation hadn't been shot in yet. Next week, Gary said, the carpenter was going to shoot in the foam in the basement and subbasement. He explained that he intended to put in $\frac{3}{4}$ " drywall on the long walls and knotty pine car siding on the short walls.

"Why the car siding?" Ron asked.

"You see where that slab is cut for the stairwell don't you?" Gary asked.

"Yes, but what does that have to do with anything?" Ron asked.

"I've been talking to my carpenter, Jim Littletree," Gary explained, "We're going to make the door to the shelter stairwell look like part of the wall. That's a lot easier to do if the wall is wood instead of drywall."

"You and your fascination with secret panels never ceases to amaze me," Ron laughed. "In fact this whole place is like someone's idea of a fantasy."

"The war in Iraq has really bogged down since Bush declared victory, Ron," Gary replied, "You watch, those Iraqis are going to start killing off Americans a few at a time. The Iraqis are just like the Iranians; pretty soon some mullah will be talking about making Iraq into another state ruled by the ayatollahs. Then a bunch of terrorists will come in from other countries and really stir things up. After that, OPEC will get into the act and gas prices will go up to over \$4 a gallon. This place may be a fantasy now, but you wait, one of these days, it's will save our butts."

They went upstairs and sat down in the living room for coffee. Sharon remembered to bring Ron the bottle of liquid sweet and low. Gary could never understand how anyone could drink the stuff, but no two people were completely alike and Ronald liked his Sweet and Low.

Gary asked Ron what was going on with Robert. First, Ron said, he'd had to have his bypass done over. Lately, his back had been bothering him and he was on a ton of pain pills. They were going over to be with him for the surgery. Bob's wife had a stomach operation to help her lose weight and she wasn't much better off than Bob. Clearly Ron was worried and Gary hoped everything would be ok.

Gary and Ron dug out the gas grill and installed one of the propane bottles. Gary let Ron grill the steaks since Ron seemed to have a better knack for it than he did. Gary always cooked by a rule of thumb. Cook the meat until blood just started to come out one side and turn it. Cook it the same amount of time on the other side. He usually got something running between medium-rare and medium. When it got down to cooking steaks for 4 people, all to a different degree of doneness, Gary tended to screw it up.

After dinner Gary explained to Ron what he had hoped would happen. He had hoped, he said, that Ron and Linda would move to the ranch and build a shelter/basement just like his. The tunnel would have connected the two. Now, he supposed, he'd finish the tunnel, but fill it for a ways with dirt. That would give them an escape exit in the event that they actually had to use the shelter and something blocked the blast door.

The nearest major cities were Flagstaff to the west and Albuquerque to the east. Holbrook was right in the middle of nowhere in Gary's opinion, the perfect place for a survivalist.

Ron was tired from the drive and Linda and he turned in early. Gary went on the Internet to the Springfield Armory website and drooled over the M1A rifles. He intended to start his armory with 6 M1A loadeds and 6 Mossberg 590A1 shotguns. He would build from there. Gary was a person who believed in firepower for two unique situations. Up close and personal, he believed that a shotgun filled with slugs and buckshot. Further out, he wanted a good .30 caliber rifle.

From what he'd been reading about the performance of the M-16 and M-9 in Iraq, the US would be better off dumping the .223 cartridge. They were really only good for spray and pray tactics, keeping the enemy's head down. He knew that a lot of people wouldn't agree with him, but what the heck, it was his arsenal.

He went to his second favorite website, Ammoman.com and noticed that Eric had 20-round M-14 magazines on sale for \$35 each in quantity. It might be getting the cart in front of the horse, but that was a good price. He ordered 100 and used his VISA to pay.

Gary heard the thunder and looked out the window. He'd been so engrossed in shopping the web that he hadn't even noticed that it had started to rain. He hadn't seen rain-fall that heavy in a long time, either. He hoped the new cofferdam did its job. He turned off the computer and went to bed.

The next morning, it was still raining, but not nearly as hard. Gary was dying to see how the cofferdam had faired and he persuaded Ron to join him. They drove over to the cof-

ferdam, had to use the 4-wheel drive for the first time, and got out to inspect the damage to the dam.

Gary couldn't see where any water had even reached the dam. They got back in the pickup and drove west toward the property line. A quarter mile short of the property line, they came up what looked to be a new ravine being formed. Apparently, leveling the hills to get dirt and rocks for the cofferdam and ravine had changed the contour of the section enough that the water was following a slightly different slope.

If that were the case, the cofferdam was worth its weight in gold, even if it weren't actually needed. Gary decided to call Jim Thomas on Monday and see if Jim knew of a geologist who could evaluate the effect of the changes on the property. Maybe he had gotten lucky and accidentally corrected the problem that caused the property to have so many ravines.

Ron and Linda left about 10 am. Gary hadn't said a word about Ron moving to the ranch, the seed had been planted; now it needed time to germinate. Gary putzed around for the remainder of Sunday and the rain continued to fall. As it got on towards evening, he got in the Dodge and drove back to the cofferdam. There was still no sign of water. He then drove over to the new ravine. The new ravine looked like it must have deepened by 9 or 10 inches; it was a little difficult to tell. For sure he was going to get a geologist out here to look at the property. It could just be a fluke and in time, he could be faced by the same water problem that had cut the original ravines in the first place.

They hadn't gotten around to putting in a satellite dish yet so the only thing they could watch was movies on the TV. He dug out "Flashdance" and watched Jennifer Beals wiggle her behind one more time. Well, he thought, I can still look, can't I? By the time he was ready for bed, the rain had slacked off. Maybe it would stop before morning. The forecast on the Internet only gave a 40% likelihood that it would still be raining the next day.

The next morning, it was clear in the west and clearing overhead. It still looked pretty stormy to the east, but the Doppler radar image on the internet Weather Channel showed the clouds definitely moving to the east. Gary got on the phone and called Jim Thomas.

"Morning Gary," Jim said, "How did the cofferdam work out? Did it hold back the water and divert it into the third ravine?"

"It is really strange Jim," Gary said, "The water never made it to the cofferdam from what I can tell. It almost looks like cutting down those hills to get the building materials for the dam changed the contour of the property. There is a new ravine being cut about ¼ mile in from the west property line."

"Huh," Jim said, "I never figured on that."

“Anyway, where would I go to get a geologist to look at the property?” Gary asked. “It is doing everything backwards, I know, but maybe we inadvertently solved my water problem.”

“It might be easiest if you contacted the Geology department at Arizona State University in Tempe, Gary,” Jim suggested.

Gary got on the phone to Phoenix right away. It took a while, but he managed to track down a professor who did a lot of consultation work. The man could drive out Wednesday, but he wanted \$50 an hour, door-to-door for the round trip and time onsite. Gary told him come on out to Holbrook; the problem was important and needed an expert opinion right away.

The electrician finished wiring the subbasement on Monday evening and started on the basement on Tuesday. Littletree had the lumberyard deliver the drywall and they started lugging it down the stairs a pair of sheets at a time. Gary stopped Jim and asked if they should rent a crane and lower it down all at once. Jim said that it would be cheaper to just hire some day labor. Gary told him to drive into Holbrook and pick up as many men as he could find. He was willing to go \$6 an hour for good workers.

Jim took off and was back in an hour with 8 men. He and his crew began to install the insulation while the day laborers hauled the heavy drywall pairs down the stairs and into the subbasement. Gary paid the men in cash, figuring that they probably didn't make enough to worry about income taxes anyway.

The geologist showed up from Arizona State University about 10:30 Wednesday morning. He had a stack of topographical maps with him and some surveying equipment. Gary showed him the cofferdam and where they had taken down the hills to get material for the dam and to partially fill in the ravine he'd built his house in. Towards the end of the day, the geologist came to the front door. Gary invited him in and he spread out a map on the kitchen table.

“Mind if I ask you a question?” the geologist said.

“Go ahead,” Gary replied.

“Did you intentionally cut down those hills, for the fill or was it an accident,” he asked.

“Actually, I supposed you would have to say that it was a little bit of both,” Gary replied. “The contractor wanted to take down the hill behind the house, but I wanted it to stay and asked him to find a different source of materials, why?”

“Look at this map,” the geologist said, “Those hills that you took down forced the water into the channels that cut the three ravines right here in this area. When you took down those hills, here, here and here,” he said pointing to the map, “You changed the entire watershed. You are going to have a new ravine form right where you see it starting. I

would suggest that you take down these two hills here also," he said again pointing to the map. "If you do that, you're only going to have the single ravine form. And by the way, why did you want to keep the hill behind the house?"

"I just wanted the windbreak for winds out of the north mostly, why?" Gary asked.

"Mr. Olsen, that was the smartest thing you could have done," he continued, "If you'd taken that hill out, your house would have been undercut extensively. Did I understand that you're planning on filling in the three ravines?"

"So far, I had only planned on filling in the first two, again, why?" Gary asked.

"If you were to put a 3' culvert into the third ravine and do a little grading here and here," he said returning to the map, "You could limit the size of the new ravine. Then you could fill in the third ravine, too."

"Would you write that all up for me and send me a letter?" Gary asked.

"Of course, that's part of the fee," the man responded. "Speaking of which, I'm going to give you the day rate of \$400, if you'd prefer to pay me now. You'll have the letter within the week."

After the geologist left, Gary called Jim Thomas on the phone. "Jim, I got the geologist's oral report and I'll have his written report by the end of the week. When do you have a sizable block of time open?"

"Gary I don't have any large blocks of time open until winter, I take it you need something now?" Jim replied.

"Yes, I need to put a 3' culvert into the third ravine and a storm drain to funnel the water into the culvert," Gary said, "I also need to have some more hills taken down and some fill work done on the ravines."

"Gary, I can handle putting in the drain, but I'm going to have to refer you to a grading contractor I know for the grading work," Jim said. "We don't really do all that much grading work anyway. I've probably done more for you than I'd normally do for anyone."

"Give me his number and I'll call him," Gary said.

"I'll give you his name and number, but let me call him," Jim suggested, "I might be able to get you a little discount if I hire him as a subcontractor."

"Ok. Say look, I see a truck pulling in, just make the call," Gary said, "I'll get the name and number from him when he contacts me."

Gary went out to meet the truck driver. He had the cook tops, ovens, deep fat fryers and

stainless counters. The counters were knocked down and needed assembly. That turned out to be a good thing too. Had they been assembled, they never would have fit through the blast door.

Gary got Littletree and his crew to help get the boxes down into the kitchen area. The driver told him installers would be by the next day to get everything setup and installed. Gary signed for the delivery and called it a day. He sort of figured that he'd used up his good luck for one day, maybe more.

Gary sat in front of his computer absently fingering his gold plated 5-year chip that Ron had given him. He sure hoped that Robert was ok. Ron and Robert had a tough few years, but now that they'd gotten closer to each other, he'd hate to have anything happen to Robert.

The next morning the installer showed up to assemble the counters and install the ovens and cook tops. Gary outlined what he had in mind to the men and to Jim. He wanted to make a trip to Phoenix and he wanted Jim to keep an eye open and provide direction to the installers if they ran into a problem.

"Honey, I want to make a drive down to Phoenix, do you want to come along?" Gary asked Sharon.

"Will we have time to stop at some fabric stores?" she asked.

"Sure," he said, "What I want to do won't take long."

Gary took the back way into Mesa down through the Tonto National Forest. He made a point to stop at the fabric stores first; he needed to oil the wheels a bit for what he had planned. When Sharon had her fill of shopping, he went to the Arizona Sportsman store in Mesa. He wanted 6 rifles and 6 shotguns. Their prices were reasonable, but they didn't have that many of either gun in stock.

Gary filled out the forms and plunked down around \$10,000 for the 12 guns. It would be two weeks, he was told, before the guns would be in. He could come back for them or they could ship them to Nichols Sportsman in Holbrook, his choice. Gary opted for the latter. Even if Nichols charged him a fee, it beat the heck out of another trip to Phoenix. It had gone better in Phoenix than he had thought and they were back in Holbrook before the Mexican restaurant closed. He treated Sharon to dinner and they went home.

Friday morning, Gary got on the phone and ordered 38 800-round cases of the 7.62x51mm Aussie surplus ammo from Ammoman. That set him back another \$7 thousand. He wrote out a check for the amount and planned to priority mail it the same day. He figured that the guns and ammo would arrive within a day or two of each other.

While he was in Holbrook, Gary stopped by Nichols and told them he had a shipment of guns coming their way from the Arizona Sportsman in Mesa. They said something

about a fee, but when he ordered 12 cases of 3" 15-pellet 00 Buck and 6 cases of 3" Brenneke Slugs, the issue of the fee seemed to get dropped. They would have to order the ammunition, they told him. They told them he would pick it up with the guns and Gary wrote out another check to the shotgun shells. This gun business could get expensive, quickly, and there were still some firearms the Gary wanted to purchase.

After Gary had paid Jim and Maria, he went down to the subbasement to assess the situation. The kitchen was all in; all he lacked was pots, pans, utensils, dishes, cutlery, glassware and food.

The dry wall was all up waiting to be seamed and the drop ceiling still had to be installed. The concrete floor would have to do for now, too. It had a steel trowel finish and he could wait to install linoleum. The overhead lighting would go in with the drop ceiling. All of the lighting would be florescent, but he intended to install the more expensive broad-spectrum tubes like they used to grow plants. It would be more like natural sunlight and eliminate the mood altering qualities often associated with florescent lighting.

The plumber had not installed the baseboard steam heating fixtures either, that would come when the walls were done. He marveled at the quietness, but of course the generator was not running. Jim had come to him about the wall around the room holding the generator and suggested that that wall be built with 6" framing. That would allow for additional soundproofing. He had finally had to tell Jim that when he got a good idea like that, just implement it unless it represented a significant cost.

Another week of construction and he would be ready to start stocking the shelter. There were the surplus military bunk beds and mattresses to buy, furniture for Sharon's and his bedroom, tables and chairs for the dining room and recreation room, a TV for the recreation room, the radio equipment and antennas. He wanted to get Jim to build him a gun rack where he could store as many as 36 long arms.

Gary was writing it down as he thought of it and the list was getting long. He hadn't put in a medical facility and didn't have any medical supplies and didn't know how to use most of them if he had them. His head swimming and the list approaching two pages in length, he called it a night and went back to the house to take his meds. He decided that this was one of those rare two Xanax tablet nights.

Gary took his insulin and pills and literally dropped into a chair.

"What's the matter dear?" Sharon asked.

"I was down in the shelter taking stock of things honey," he said, "I made of list of all the things left to be done and all of the things we need to do to have the shelter completed. Then, we have to get the stairwell built and the ravines filled in. I just don't know."

"You don't know what?" Sharon asked.

"I don't know what I don't know, I guess," he replied.

"You just taking too big of a bite Gary," Sharon said looking at Gary's list, "Littletree is almost done with the shelter. Then a little electrical and plumbing work and it will be all done. We can probably go to a restaurant supplier and take care of the kitchen in one fell swoop.

"They might even be able to help us with the tables and chairs and some things I can see that you've left off the list. For example, you haven't installed a dishwasher or the pots and pans sink. There are also some accessories for the kitchen you've overlooked. Why don't you let me take care of finishing up the kitchen, will that help?"

"Would it ever, wow," Gary exclaimed.

"And, after I get the kitchen done, let me take care of the food supplies," she suggested, "You'll probably just come running to me with a thousand questions anyway. Now, do you feel any better about what is left to be done?"

"Maybe. Well I suppose, yes, I do," Gary fumbled. He got the list back from Sharon and went to the kitchen table. He reorganized the list into major task groups and put the particulars for each task group as indents. By the time he was done, it looked a whole lot simpler and the Xanax was kicking in. He went to bed and slept until 10am the next morning.

The phone ringing awakened Gary. By the time he was able to clear away enough cobwebs and get out of bed, and go to the bathroom, Sharon was off the phone.

"Who was that honey?" he asked.

"That was Linda," Sharon said, "Robert died."

"Damn, that's going to hit Ron right in the teeth," Gary said. "What happened?"

"She didn't go into it too much," Sharon said. "The funeral is today and they are staying to help Bob's wife for a few days."

"How is Ron handling it?" Gary asked, concerned.

"Not too well according to Linda," Sharon answered, "I think that's why they are planning on stopping here on the way home."

"I sure hope that he changes his mind," Gary said. "There are still a lot to of things to get done before they get here."

Sharon started in the first thing Monday morning locating a restaurant supply company. RESCO/CRESCO Restaurant Equipment and Supply Company, an independently

owned and operated foodservice equipment and kitchen design supply company operating in 5 cities in 3 western states. She found them on the Internet and browsed their catalog. The company had everything they needed. She placed an order right over the net.

Next, she brought up her recipe program on the computer and planned a one-month menu. The program allowed her to adjust the recipes based on the number of servings. Gary told her to adjust the recipes for 36 people. That was easily done, but the next part of the process was more work.

After having her recipe program display the recipes in weight of ingredients rather than volume of ingredients, she painstakingly transferred the weights of each ingredient to a spreadsheet. This took her a whole day, but in the end, she had a shopping list that would feed 36 people for one month or 6 people for a year. She had gone ahead and ordered the food through a grocery wholesaler.

Littletree and his crew taped the subbasement in one day. The next day, they knocked off the high spots and began to put down a final coat of joint compound. They finished that up on Wednesday and started in on the drop ceiling. Jim told Gary that it would take to the end of the next week to complete that part of the project. He asked if Gary had a painter in mind and Gary told him he hadn't a clue.

Jim said he could recommend a man from Holbrook and Gary told him to just take care of it; the details of this whole project were starting to overwhelm him. Jim should call the plumber and electrician, too when they were needed to finish off their work. Gary also mentioned the gun rack. Jim's only question was how many guns? When Gary told him 36, Jim's eyes got a little bigger for a moment, but he said ok, no problem.

They had been hitting the line of credit a little more than Gary planned. Gary checked his Iowa checking account and was surprised to see a sizable balance. Well good, that took some pressure off. He wrote a check on the Iowa account and drove up to Holbrook. He put 90% of the money against the balance of his line of credit and the rest in their checking account.

He stopped by Nichols and talked to the owner. He wanted several firearms and wondered if they couldn't come to some kind of an understanding on the price. Gary explained that he knew that the margin on firearms was about 30%. He'd just as soon give Nichols the business, but he didn't want to pay full retail. Could Nichols get by with a 15% margin, plus freight? That depended Nichols said on how large the order was. Gary told him he wanted 6 Winchester 9422's in .22 LR, 6 Ruger Mini-14's, 12 Ruger GP-100 .357 magnums with 4" barrels, 2 Winchester Trailsend .357 magnum rifles, and 2 Ruger Vaquero .357 magnums with 5½ " barrels. And, if Nichols could get him some gun leather, he wanted a couple of western rigs for the Vaqueros.

What about ammunition Nichols wanted to know. Gary told him that he had been buying it from Ammoman. Nichols laughed, he could beat that guy's price anytime in large

quantities. And, given the size of the possible order, he could live with the 15% margin if Gary paid the freight.

Gary told Nichols that he wanted 5,000 rounds for each of the Mini-14's, 16,000 rounds of 158 grain semi-jacketed soft point and the same quantity of 158 grain semi-jacketed hollow point for the .357's and 50 bricks of .22LR high velocity solid point ammo.

He was also going to want 6 more M1A's if Nichols would give him the same discount. Nichols wrote it all down and added it up. Gary almost choked on his mouthful of coffee. He did a quick mental calculation and told Nichols to figure the tax and give him a final total. That check was going to be a little harder to explain to Sharon. He told Nichols to wait on ordering the gun leather until he had the waist sizes.

Gary's search of the Internet produced bunk beds that he could stack 3 high at Iron Mike's. He ordered six pairs and extra posts. The higher ceilings gave the shelter a more open feeling anyway. And, if they actually needed to use the shelter and had very many people, the higher ceilings might help avoid claustrophobia. By Friday, Jim was well along with the ceilings, the plumber had all of the heating fixtures in and the painter was staying ahead of Jim.

Only in America – Chapter 5 – Finishing Touches

Ron and Linda pulled in around 2pm the next day. Ron didn't look good. It was obvious that he was taking Robert's death harder than Gary imagined. Gary had never actually met Robert. The few times he and his wife had been to Ron and Linda's something had always come up and they'd been unable to get over to meet them. Gary sensed, rather than knew, just to keep his mouth shut. He gave his pal a warm hug, expressed his deepest sympathies and dropped it. Ron would talk about it when he was ready. That didn't prove to be long in coming.

"It just seems so unfair Gar-bear," Ron began. "First, they had to get him stable for the first operation because his heart was acting up. They went in and did to his back what they did to yours, decompressed the spinal column and repaired 3 discs. He was in a lot of pain though, and the surgeon decided that they had no choice but to go in a second time. He made it through the second operation ok, but the next day, he had a heart attack and they couldn't save him."

"Ron, I can't begin to tell you how sorry I am," Gary said, "How is your sister-in-law doing?"

"Not good at all Gary," Ron shook his head. "She had that operation on her stomach; actually they took out several feet of intestine. She was so overweight that she didn't have much choice. She had trouble every since they did the operation up in Denver. She's talking about moving back to California to live in Palmdale where she'll be close to us."

"I guess that when it rains, it pours," Gary offered.

"I guess so," Ron agreed. "Hey, enough of this morbid crap, how is your project coming along?"

"After you left, I got a geologist in from Tempe," Gary said. "It turned out that the cofferdam itself wasn't the solution. Removing some of the hills was. I've got a fella taking down the hills the geologist recommended I take out and the extra material is being used to fill in the ravine below the house."

"I noticed that you almost have that ravine filled in," Ron said, "How far along are they with the project?"

"Well, Jim Thomas put in a storm drain and the contractor finished laying a 3' culvert yesterday," Gary continued. "They are going to completely fill in the 3rd ravine. Thomas will be by tomorrow to put in the stairwell and we'll finish filling in the upstream side of my ravine."

"I want to see how you're progressing on the shelter Gar-bear," Ron said, "Come on, show me."

Gary led Ron down to the subbasement. The painter was about ¾ done with the paint, the hot water heat registers were in and over a third of the drop ceiling was done. Ron was amazed at the progress that had taken place in two weeks.

“Jeez Gary,” Ron said, “You’re almost done. What about furnishings and food and the like?”

“Sharon ordered the dishes and kitchen equipment from a California outfit that has a warehouse in Denver,” Gary explained. “She also ordered some tables and chairs. That stuff will be in this coming week. Then she used that recipe program I bought her and figured out a menu for a month. I told her to plan on 36 people for a month and she figured out food quantities and ordered the food from a grocery wholesaler.”

“Thirty-six people?” Ron replied, “Why so many?”

“It was just the fastest way to figure out food for 6 people for 6 months,” Gary explained. “Oh and I finally bought some guns. Almost broke the bank on that one.”

“I see all the .308 ammo,” Ron said, “Are you still on the M1A kick?”

“You darned right I am,” Gary replied quickly. “The M1 Garand was one of the finest battle rifles the US ever had. The M-14 took that a step further and added the detachable magazine feature. The full auto thing was a mistake, but the M1A is a pretty good battle rifle.”

“I tend to lean towards the FAL, myself,” Ron said.

“That’s a good rifle too, Ron,” Gary acknowledged, “I know the magazines are one hell of a lot cheaper than M-14 magazines. I guess it’s just a matter of personal preference.”

“What about the M-16?” Ron asked, “Did you buy any of those yet?”

“No, I didn’t,” Gary replied. “I did order some Mini-14’s, but I passed on the AR-15’s; same cartridge, less expensive firearm. By this time next week, I will have a full armory.”

“I’ll have to admit, I’m impressed,” Ron allowed, “Maybe you aren’t totally crazy. What about the indoor range? Done anything with that?”

“I haven’t put in either the indoor range or the outdoor range, Ron,” Gary said, “Once I get the shelter finished, we’ll move up to the basement. That’s when the indoor range will get done. As far as the outdoor range goes, I’m going to wait until they’re finished grading the land and have my ravine and the third ravine filled in.”

“I was talking to Linda on the way down,” Ron said reflecting, “With Bob gone, we’re not going to move to New Mexico, but I still want to get the hell out of California. We were

talking about possibly taking you up on the offer.”

“Ron, how about I deed over 10 acres to you and Linda?” Gary said. “Free and clear, I might add. All you would need to do is built this same basement structure and set a triple wide on the basement.”

“Jeez Gar,” Ron said, “That would be great, but I don’t know about building a big fancy shelter like this one.”

“You wouldn’t have to Ron,” Gary said, “We could use your shelter for storage, including moving all of our stored goods to your shelter and that would give us more room in mine.”

“I don’t know Gary, you’re talking a couple of hundred thousand,” Ron said. “We only have about \$150,000 clear equity in our home.”

“So you have a house payment,” Gary said, “So what? You have a house payment now don’t you?”

“You’re right about that partner,” Ron smiled, “And, Linda’s mother’s estate hasn’t settled yet. We’re not sure how much that’s going to amount to. We found out just before we left that her mother had a large insurance policy with Linda and her sister as beneficiaries, but I don’t know how much that is.”

“What about Linda’s father Ron?” Gary asked. “Are you still going down there a weekend every month?”

“Yes and that’s getting pretty old,” Ron said. “The SOB is worth \$20 million and he’s too cheap to pay someone to fix the sprinklers. They took away his driving license so I don’t have to service his cars anymore. That’s another reason I want to get out of Palmdale. If we move far enough away, we won’t have to go down to Newport Beach every month.”

“Well, partner, you do what you want, but if you decide to move here give me a call,” Gary suggested. “I’ll deed over the ten acres and we can get Jim Thomas started on the basements.”

“Are you going to have enough fill to fill in that ravine where you propose to build my home?” Ron asked.

“Ron, our problem is going to be what to do with the excess fill,” Gary laughed. “The upside to all of this grading is that the value of the land will go way the hell up. I may even have Jim put a few inches of concrete on the cofferdam just in case the geologist is wrong.”

Ron started asking some questions that hadn’t come up before. Like, why did they build a 40x80 basement and subbasement? The house wasn’t 80’ long and only the third

section reached to the back edge. Gary explained that the third section was 12'x20' and that part of the house was exactly 40' wide. The other 60' of exposed basement had ½" steel plating laid over the trusses and 6" of concrete poured on top. As far as the house being shorter than the basements, they'd laid the same ½' plate and poured a 6' wide sidewalk from the rear of the home to the front. You wouldn't even know that there was basement under the concrete unless you went into the basement and spent time studying the layout.

Ron and Linda spent the weekend with Sharon and Gary. By the time they left on Monday, they were talking very seriously about moving to Holbrook. Gary wrote down the name and number of the mobile home dealer in Lancaster for them, just in case. The order from the restaurant supply company came Monday afternoon and the boxes were stacked in one of the empty, finished rooms in the shelter. Jim Thomas had subcontracted the stairs and the subcontractor brought them in totally prefabricated. By Monday evening, one could finally get to the subbasement without leaving the house.

Thomas's men put in the rebar and framed in the stairwell. Thursday, they poured the concrete and Friday they removed the forms. The interior forms had to be taken into the basement and carted through the house. Sharon made them lay down drop cloths so nothing would stain her carpets. Gary had a conversation with the grading contractor and asked him to finish extending the trench to the second ravine. Thomas could build the remaining 50 yards of tunnel at the end of the season.

A week later, Gary's ravine was completely filled in. Gary had the grading contractor run a blade over the entire section of ground to level it ever so slightly. He brought in a landscaping contractor, and for the next month a crew tilled in several truckloads of manure and put in a watering system for the entire section. They seeded the entire section in grass to prevent erosion. When he saw how much water it would take to water the whole 640 acres, Gary almost got on his knees and thanked God that Thomas had insisted that the well driller put in a 6" well.

When Gary had first seen the well, he'd almost lost it. But Jim explained that the drilling cost the same, it was so much per foot. The pipe had cost more, but if Gary intended to develop his ranch into a housing community someday, he'd need the water. Thomas had also run a 6" line through the subbasement floor to get the water out of the shelter to the rest of the ranch. The lines terminated in what looked like a concrete box with a manhole cover about 50 yards from the house.

Gary ordered radio equipment and antennas from Amateur Electronic Supply. He put up a single tower and had beam antennas and vertical antennas installed. When the surplus bunk beds arrived, Littletree and his men set them up for Gary. Everything in the shelter was moved into it place and Gary was finally done. He used up his line of credit before he was able to build the indoor range in the basement. He talked the situation over with Sharon and they decided to put ½ the trust income against the credit line to reduce the balance and ½ towards finishing the basement. The basement walls however had been completed and unless one knew how to open the panel on the west end of

the basement wall, there was no way to access the subbasement. Littletree had put in a door activated by a garage door opener.

Jim had gotten the idea for the door from the movie *Absolute Power* starring Clint Eastwood, he said. It had taken quite a bit of engineering to make the door work the way he wanted. The actual door was a $\frac{3}{4}$ " steel plate the size of the opening and was hinged on one side. It opened using a screwdrive garage door opener shortened to an appropriate length. He had installed dead bolts on the stairwell side and an electrical switch to the power for the motor, in effect providing for a double locking system.

There were 10,000 possible combinations for a garage door opener he told Gary, so the likelihood than anyone would stumble on the correct combination was remote. And even if they did, if Gary was in the shelter, the switch would be turned off and the deadbolts thrown, so it would take dynamite just to get past that door.

Ron called about 6 weeks after they returned to California. They had decided to move to Holbrook he told Gary. He wanted Thomas's phone number so that he could get him started on the basements. Gary gave it to him and told him that he'd keep an eye on things for them. If they sold their home sooner than planned, Sharon and he would be glad to put them up for however long it took to get their home finished.

Ron got on the phone to Jim Thomas right away. He introduced himself and told Jim he was Gary's friend from California. Jim said something about *the other one* but Ron didn't get his drift. He asked Thomas to start as soon as possible. Jim told him to send a check for \$20,000 and he would start in mid October. After getting Ron's call, Jim called Gary.

"I just got a call from a fella named Ron Green in Palmdale," Jim said, "Is he the other nut you were planning on building the connecting home for?"

"That's the guy Jim." Gary laughed. "You still think I'm crazy huh?"

"Downright certifiable," Jim laughed back. "Do you have your home completely finished?"

"Sure do Jim," Gary said, "We even graded the weeds off the section, irrigated it and planted grass."

"Still think I was wrong to put in a 6" well?" Jim asked.

"Sorry about that Jim," Gary said. "Actually if you hadn't, I'd have a water shortage problem now that we've graded the section and solved the runoff problem. The grass we planted should help with the runoff too."

Thomas had a few down days and his men slipped down to the ranch and poured the slab for the tunnel floor. Every once in a while, they'd have a free day or two and they

put in the rebar and forms for the tunnel walls. Finally one day in early September, they had the concrete poured for the walls. Later that month, they had a couple of free days and erected the forms for the roof of the tunnel. A week later, 4 men showed up and they leveled the concrete with 2x4's almost as fast as it was being poured. The grading contractor showed up the next week and graded the tunnel trench closed. Gary called the landscaping contractor and had them till in some manure, install irrigation lines and seed the strip.

Gary took a call from Jim Thomas just after they'd poured the top of the tunnel. Thomas wanted to know if Ron wanted a well, too. Gary said that he thought his well was enough for both, but that if Jim thought that Ron needed a well, go ahead and put it in. When he didn't see a well driller, Gary assumed that his well would be the only one on the property. It wasn't that a second well wasn't drilled, it was just that Gary didn't see the driller.

Gary's trust fund was producing a pretty steady flow of income and they were slowly getting the credit line balance reduced. The sooner the better Gary thought, the interest rate was a bit high considering savings accounts were only paying 1%. He asked Sharon to prepare a completely different menu for 36 people for a month and to do all of her manipulations.

When she had it done, she showed him the menu. With few exceptions, the new menu was completely different from the previous they had bought the food for and stocked the shelter with. She suggested that they wait until Ron and Linda got there before buying any more food. That way, they wouldn't have to move it but the one time instead of twice. Sounded good to Gary, he wanted to get the credit line paid down quickly.

The third week in October, Thomas began the work on Ron and Linda's basements. Gary told him the only exception from his plan was that Ron would be getting his water from him. Thomas said he had a well put in for his friend.

Up to this time, Gary and Sharon had been going to Holbrook when they needed diesel fuel for the Dodge. Gary contacted a supplier and found out that he could save enough on fuel to recover the cost of a tank and pump in 7-8 years. He had the supplier install a 40,000-gallon double walled fiberglass tank and a pump in Ron's ravine as far away from the house as possible.

It looked like it would take a little longer to pay off that line of credit. Ron's basement went up a lot faster than Gary's and Gary called Ron to let him know that the basements were ready for the triple wide. Ron and Linda had finally sold their home and the timing was near perfect. He told Gary that they would order the home that day and have it delivered immediately. Their home wasn't scheduled to close for about 5 weeks, so it would be right around Christmas before they got there. Gary asked Maria to have Jim call him, he had a fair amount of winter work for her husband.

Gary went out on the net and began to investigate indoor shooting range equipment.

The more he read, the more confusing it became. He finally picked a 4-lane range setup within his price range and ordered it. When Jim Littletree called, he talked to him about installing the indoor range, and erecting a wall, Kevlar lined, to keep the bullets within the range. Jim brought up the issue of noise, but Gary told him he intended to buy some Ruger Mark II's with integral suppressors. Jim told him he could start next week, after he found a new trailer park for his mobile home.

"I didn't know that you lived in a mobile home Jim," Gary said.

"Yes, Maria and I have a 14'x70' singlewide Gary," Jim replied.

"Let me ask you something, if it's not rude," Gary said, "How much lot rent do you have to pay?"

"We were paying \$200 a month, but I'm afraid that is going to go up," Jim answered.

"If you wanted to put in a water line and run the electrical, I'd give you a ½ acre lot rent free Jim," Gary offered.

"Really?" Jim replied. "What's involved in putting in the electrical and water?"

"Not much," Gary explained, "I have the water head for the irrigation system that you can hook into so it would just be putting in a trench for the water line. Maybe Jim Thomas will let you use his trencher. The electrical would be a trench up from the road and a conduit to hold the lines. You should be able to get by with a single trench running straight from the water head to the road and a short trench to your trailer. Water is free by the way."

"Mind if I come out and take a look Gary?" Jim asked.

"Come on down," Gary said.

Jim was there in 30 minutes. It was just a quarter mile from the concrete box containing the water pipes to the road. Gary and Jim walked the distance and Jim commented that there was room for several homes with ½ acre lots between the water head and the road. Gary said maybe he should put in several lots. Jim laughed and said that they be filled in a New York minute.

"What do you mean by that?" Gary asked.

"My two cousins, the guys who work for me, live in the same trailer park as Maria and me," Jim explained, "They've been evicted too."

"Another example of *get the Indian?*" Gary asked.

"Probably," Jim allowed.

“Tell you what Jim,” Gary said, “Let’s put in our own little trailer park. If Jim won’t let you use his trencher for free, I’ll rent it or another. You can cut the trench and I’ll pay for the materials. If we make the lots 100’ wide by 200’ deep, each will be almost ½ acre. We should be able to put 12 lots between the road and the water head. We can even pour slabs to set the trailers on. You supply the labor and I’ll supply the materials. I’ll even pay the three of you \$6 an hour under the table so you have something to live on.”

“Man, you have yourself a deal,” Jim grinned from ear-to-ear.

“One other thing Jim,” Gary said, “When my friend Ron gets here, they are going to want a housekeeper, too. Do you suppose that Maria would be available?”

“Absolutely,” Jim said.

Gary called Jim Thomas and asked about the trencher. He explained to Jim what was going on with Jim Littletree and his cousins and that he was going to put in twelve trailer slabs. Thomas said that the trencher was available, and he’d supply it and an operator no charge if Gary would supply the fuel. He even offered the loan of steel forms for the slabs. He wanted to know if tomorrow morning was soon enough.

Each slab would take about 13 yards of concrete Jim advised, he’d buy it wholesale; the ready mix company gave him a discount, and save Gary a little more money. Gary laughed to himself, the \$10 a yard discount meant that Jim had made \$8,500 dollars on his basements just on the concrete markup, no wonder he did the job for \$95 a yard installed with steel.

Gary filled Littletree in on the conversation with Thomas and told Jim to contract the electrician about what they need for materials for the electrical portion of the job. The plumber could tell him what they need for water, too. There was a 3’ diameter pipe above the septic tank for access to clean the tank. The plumber could help them with the septic hookup, too. Jim was in charge of the whole project, Gary told him. Just don’t take any shortcuts.

It only took the trencher one day to put in the trenches. Jim had spent the remainder of the previous day in Holbrook lining up pipes, conduit, electrical wire, telephone wire, meter boxes and the things they needed for the project. The plumber also felt a little sorry for the men and pitched in his labor for a day, as did the electrician. By Tuesday night, everything was installed and Jim and his cousins stayed late shoveling the dirt back into the trenches.

On Wednesday, the three men began setting up the forms. Jim Thomas had sent along enough for 6 slabs. They put in the forms and ordered the ready mix deliveries beginning at 3pm and coming one every half hour. On Thursday, they pulled the forms and set them up for the last six slabs. First thing Friday morning the ready mix trucks began arriving at half hour intervals. They knew that they should let the concrete cure for 30

days, but the schedule simply didn't permit them the luxury. They had an additive put in the concrete mix. On Monday, Jim and his cousins moved the mobile homes to the site and left them sitting on their wheels. It must have been interesting that night with the home tipping as people moved from one end of the home to the other.

On Tuesday, they backed the homes on the slabs and managed to get two of the three homes leveled. They finished on Wednesday and had everything hooked up and running except for the phones. Citizens Telecom was coming on Thursday to hook up the phones. Not a bad two weeks. Jim and his cousins used the first three slabs closest to the homes. The only problem that they'd had with the project was putting in backflow valves on the irrigation lines. The plumber had charged Gary for the full day he'd put in on that not so little that project. It about half po'd Gary; they should have put in the backflow valves in the first place.

With everyone settled in, Gary got Jim and his crew working to finish off his basement before they started on Ron's. It didn't take them that long to throw up the wall for the range. They insulated the wall and put a several layers of Kevlar on both sides before they hung the drywall. The range was finished and Gary had Jim installing a bar and other niceties in the remainder of the basement.

When Jim was finished with his basement, Gary settled up with him and sent him to work on Ron's shelter. There wasn't a lot to do at Ron's, The LP was in, metered, awaiting connection, as was the huge water tank. They put up the Farnsworth system on the exterior walls and a wall for the storage room. The plumber and AmeriGas worked together to hook up the LP line and the electrician installed Ron's transfer switch. As materials arrived, they were installed, including the generator, the water purifier and so forth. With everything installed and running, Jim Thomas installed Ron's Blast Door and finished the stair well.

The day that Ron and Linda finally pulled in, their home was assembled and everything hooked up. It was the week before Christmas, 2003. Jim Littletree had done the basement walls and had another of the secret panels installed accessing the shelter. Gary and Sharon put them up for a night or two so they could get their furniture unloaded and squared away. Gary took Ron down and showed him the indoor shooting range. Ron was staring at the west wall where the entrance to the shelter staircase was hidden.

"Where's the doorway to the shelter?" Ron asked.

"Same place it always was," Gary laughed.

"You know what I meant, you dope," Ron laughed back, "Show me how it works."

Gary took out the Stanley garage door opener and made a show of pushing the button. The section of wall slowly swung in as the screw motor slowly pulled the door open. Ron started to go over to look, but Gary grabbed his arm and told him to stay where he was.

“Now, do you know exactly where the door is?” Gary asked.

“I’m only blind in my left eye,” Ron kidded him.

Gary pushed the button to close the door. When it was closed, he said, “Are you sure you know where the door is?”

Ron walked over to the wall and examined it. He knew within one board exactly where the door was built but he could see no sign of it. He began tapping on the walls. None of the wall gave of the usual hollow sound to indicate it was hiding a doorway.

“Hell, I give up, how did you pull this off?” Ron asked.

“I didn’t, Jim Littletree did,” Gary replied.

Gary opened the door again and Ron inspected the other side. Gary explained that the switch shut off the door motor and that there were deadbolts besides. Ron examined the $\frac{3}{4}$ ” steel plate. No wonder he hadn’t heard a hollow sound. They went down to the shelter. Ron was amazed at what had been accomplished during the past 11 weeks since he’d seen it. Gary led him over to his shelter and showed him around. They returned to Gary’s shelter and Gary showed him his little arsenal.

“It looks like you’re ready for World War III Gar-bear,” Ron said admiring the gun collection.

“What is your waist size Ron?” Gary asked.

“I don’t see how that’s any of your business,” Ron laughed, “But it’s 40”, why?”

“No special reason Ron, I bought you a Christmas present and I guessed you were a 40” waist,” Gary said, “That’s all.”

“Well, you should know, you used to borrow my suits before you lost all of the weight,” Ron said. So the long and short of it is that we can travel between our homes without ever going outside, right?”

“Yeah, but I don’t much care for all the stairs, that’s why I put in the sidewalk,” Gary said.

“The only thing that I seen that’s missing is a garage for my cars,” Ron said.

“Tell Jim Littletree,” Gary said, “He can throw one up for you in no time.”

“What’s with the trailer homes I passed coming in?” Ron asked.

“Littletree lives in the trailer closest to my home,” Gary said, “His two cousins live in the next two trailers.”

“I almost forgot what an Indian lover you were,” Ron said.

“You say that like it’s a dirty word Ron,” Gary said, “I’d forgotten how much you disliked Indians. I’ve heard your explanation a dozen times and it doesn’t make any sense to me. Just wait until you get to know Jim and his cousins. If you still think the same way, I’ll be totally shocked. By the way, I have your deed upstairs in my desk.”

Ron muttered something under his breath, but Gary didn’t catch it. It was just as well, what Ron had said could have really put strain on the friendship. When they got upstairs, Gary dug out the deed and handed it to Linda. “Merry Christmas he said.

“They got a bunch of Indians living in those trailers Linda,” Ron said.

“So what?” Linda replied. Ron dropped the subject. He obviously had a personal problem to resolve.

The moving van arrived the next day and Gary didn’t see hide or hair of Ron until supper. Ron explained that they beds were setup and as soon as they made a run to the market they were good to go. He had great plans for their basement, too. Littletree had stopped by to give him his garage door opener to his shelter and he’d asked the man about building him a garage. Jim had told him it would be up in a week. Gary then dropped the bombshell. He had told Jim about Ron’s unreasonable dislike for Indians. Jim had laughed and asked, “What’s new?”

“Dang it, you didn’t have to tell him,” Ron said.

“Yes I did,” Gary said, “It will mean so much more to him when you get over it.” Gary didn’t catch what Ron muttered under his breath, but decided he didn’t want to know.

One week to the day later, Ron was over bragging to Gary about the new garage. Man, he said, this was one piece of quality construction. Jim was going to build this and that and the next thing for his basement. And that Maria was the best housekeeper they’d ever had. Gary asked Ron if he wanted to take a trip to Phoenix with him. Ron said sure, why not and the next morning, they left for Scottsdale. On the way down, Gary asked Ron if he’d gotten an Arizona driver’s license yet. Sure had, why, Ron wanted to know.

“I’m heading down to a Class III dealer in Scottsdale Ron,” Gary explained. “I want to pick up some Ruger Mark II’s with integral suppressors.”

“What for?” Ron asked.

“The indoor range.” Gary said. “And if I can get any suppressors for the M1A’s. I might

buy them, too.”

“Do you suppose I can pick up some FAL’s?” Ron asked.

“Semi-auto or full auto?” Gary asked.

“Semi-auto,” Ron said, “I’m not convinced a full auto rifle is worth a crap.”

“Hell Ron, we can get those in Holbrook,” Gary said, “And for 25% off the MSRP if you buy enough.”

“I have quite a bit of money put back for guns Gary,” Ron said, “Between Linda’s mother’s estate, the insurance policy and selling our home, we’re reasonably comfortable.”

“Nichols will sell you ammo cheaper than Ammoman in large quantities,” Gary said, “I only paid \$1123.50 plus the freight and sales tax for my M1A’s.”

“Hey, that’s a good price,” Ron said.

“Sure is, but you have to buy in quantity,” Gary said, “He still makes 15% on each weapon, but he doesn’t have to inventory them or anything.”

“How much will the Mark II’s cost?” Ron asked.

“I have no idea, they were \$1,600 each when I looked at them 10 years ago,” Gary said.

“Wow, partner,” Ron exclaimed, “What are they, gold plated?”

“I wish,” Gary said, “Plus there’s that federal tax of \$200 a gun.”

Gary was in for a shock all right, just not the shock he had expected. He could get the suppressed Ruger Mark II for \$950 plus the federal tax stamp. He bought 4. The suppressors for the M1A’s that were available were from Advanced Armament Corporation and he wanted Surefire or nothing. He supposed that the ATF would crap bricks, but he had a clean records so let them crap. Ron settled for two of the suppressed Mark II pistols.

Only in America – Chapter 6 – The Lull

Ron and Gary spent a lot of time at the indoor range. A brick of .22LR was only \$9.95 and they could plink by the hour for next to nothing. Gary had pushed his line of credit close to the limit and every penny the trust fund earned went to retiring the debt. They were back to living on his Social Security Disability, his small pension and Sharon's even smaller pension.

Ron and Linda had burned through their money pretty good too and were down to his Social Security Disability and Linda's rental income. It was hard for Linda to pay Maria and Gary and Sharon found themselves dipping into the food they had stored for a rainy day and using their grocery money to pay Maria.

That continued right up to tax time in April of 2004. Gary and Sharon didn't have the money to pay the taxes so Gary filed for an extension of time to file the return. Gary hoped that by June they would have money for the taxes and maybe to replenish the food they had been borrowing from the supply room. He didn't regret any of the money he had spent on anything. You could be prepared or you could talk about being prepared. And, he supposed, even Donald Trump had the occasional cash flow problem.

By the time Jim had finished Ron's basement, Ron was over any resentments he had against Indians. He admitted to Gary that he'd probably gotten his prejudice from his brother Bob. Robert had a bad experience with a Native American at one time or another and had unknowingly transferred the anger he felt into a prejudice that eventually had rubbed off onto Ron. Gary's gambit of telling Jim about how Ron felt about Indians had paid off, too. When Ron got over his, whatever, he and Jim became fast friends.

On Wednesday April 14th, Gary drove to Holbrook to mail his extension of time. He always took them to the post office and paid for a proof of delivery receipt. June was supposed to be a good month for trust income with several interest bearing securities paying interest during May. The trust fund always distributed the prior month's income on the 4th business day of the following month. He also put all of his documents in the mail to his CPA friend in San Francisco so that office could prepare his return for 2003.

Normally, he would have used gas appliances, but in the closed environment of the shelter electric kitchen equipment made more sense. The generator used 4.2 gallons per hour under full load. Running a single generator, they would use 101 gallons of propane a day. The electrician had insisted on a 400-amp service panel for the shelter system. If they had absolutely everything running, an unlikely event, their total theoretical draw was almost 350 amps. The generators only put out 250 amps, maximum.

Gary got to thinking about the extra engineering that had gone into planning the shelters. That in turn, got him to thinking about why he had built a huge fallout shelter complex in as unlikely a place as Holbrook, Arizona.

According to all of the fallout maps Gary had found on the Internet, northeastern Arizo-

na was one of the safest places in the US when it came to radioactive fallout. There were other places around the country, but there was the climate to consider and that gave Holbrook the edge.

Holbrook was well west of Tornado Alley, so there wasn't that disaster to consider. The nearest river wouldn't likely flood their acreage. There was a remote possibility of an earthquake, but the shelter had been designed to withstand a 9.0 earthquake without damage, maybe more with the changes the engineer had made to the rebar in the shelter.

The nearest forests were to the south 30 or more miles and removing the chaparral and planting grass had all but eliminated any fire threat. Gary had used a pamphlet he'd download from FEMA call "Are You Ready" and had specifically addressed every natural and man-made hazard outlined in the booklet.

The closed environment of the shelters had dictated that Gary and Ron use larger air conditioners. The exterior units were housed under blast proof covers and open on the sides for airflow. Although the shelters used steam heat, the ceilings contained air-conditioning ducts to allow them to keep a comfortable environment at all times. The location in Holbrook was also central to their extended families. Two of Gary's children lived in Palmdale and two in Iowa. Two of Ron's children lived in Palmdale, one in Minnesota and two in the Fort Smith, Arkansas area. Nobody was more than a long day's drive away.

Gary started a list of what it would take to complete their preparations. They needed to top off the propane and diesel and buy more food and, well that was all. And all that required was money. Having gone full circle in his thinking he turned on the TV to catch the news. The satellite dish had gone in when Littletree and his cousins had moved their trailers to the new 'trailer park'. It was mounted on the antenna tower and fed all of the homes. Everyone was responsible for his or her own satellite receiver.

Gary put on his least favorite channel, CNN. Iraq was a time bomb threatening to explode. Al-Qaida was stepping up attacks in Iraq, too. The fundamental Muslim clerics were going to be the real problem. And, they were still talking about Senator Edward Kennedy's assertion that Iraq would be Dubya's "Vietnam". Gary turned the TV off and walked over to Ron's.

"Hey what are you doing partner?" Ron greeted him.

"I thought we'd go have a look and see where we should put in the 1,000-yard range," Gary replied.

"Let's go," Ron said, grabbing his hat.

At Christmas, Gary had given Ron the Vaquero, the Winchester carbine and the western rig. Ron had driven into Holbrook a few days later and gotten a real 'cowboy' hat as

opposed to the cheap knockoffs he usually wore. These days, he typically wore a blue work shirt, jeans with a western belt and buckle and cowboy boots. Gary couldn't get regular boots on and off because of the neuropathy, but he had his zip up Laredo's and wore jeans, blue work shirts and his old, worn and dirty straw cowboy hat. It was a pain for Gary to walk in the Laredo's, but he did it anyway; it was, for him, a matter of appearances.

Ron had traded in his car for a Dodge just like Gary's. The only difference between the two vehicles was the color. Gary let Ron drive and they headed west on the property towards the new ravine. The extra grading had all but halted the gouging of the new ravine. From what Gary could see, it hadn't deepened one bit and they had had three significant rainstorms since the grading contractor had finished up. Ron stopped just inside the west property line. They got out of the pickup and Ron explained why he had picked this spot.

"We're over a ½ mile from the houses here Gar-bear and the property is perfectly flat since they did the grading," Ron said.

"Makes sense to me Ron and there is nothing south of here for miles," Gary replied, "Come June, I'll see if Jim Thomas or the grading contractor can put in a backstop."

"Why do we have to wait so long?" Ron asked.

"Ronald McDonald, I'm tapped out until June 4th or 5th," Gary explained, "It's been tough these past few months."

"Is that why you've been dipping into the supplies in the shelter?" Ron asked.

"I'd hoped you wouldn't notice, but yes, exactly, why?" Gary responded.

"Linda and I have been holding it pretty close to the vest partner and if you'll give me the list of what you've used and the list for the second 1 month food supply for 36 people, we'll do the food thing," Ron smiled. "It's about time that we did our part for the shelter, anyway. Now, so far as the range goes, I have saved my last four disability checks from AmeriGas, so I have almost 5 grand to spend on this range."

"Fine with me Ron," Gary smiled.

They went back to the house and Gary got the list of what they'd 'borrowed' from the shelter's food stocks and Sharon's second list of food. Ron stuck the lists in his pocket.

"I'm going to call Jim and see what he suggests on the range," Ron said heading for the door.

It was pretty much pre-season for Jim and Ron and he worked out the details for the range. There was still a small heap of dirt from the grading project and it was just

enough for the backstop. They loaded the dirt into a dump truck, it took several trips, and Jim's men graded and compacted the backstop. Jim didn't charge Ron much for the work so Ron ordered targets for the range. In addition to the two paper target frames, he had some steel targets installed similar to what one would find on a military training range. Everything was ready in 3 weeks and Ron went looking for Gary at 6am.

"Let's get all of those weapons you bought and sight them in," Ron suggested.

"It will take an hour just to haul them all up from the armory," Gary protested.

"Pansy," Ron laughed. "Come on, they aren't doing us any good until we know they're sighted in. I've already got my six FAL rifles in the truck."

It wasn't quite as bad as Ron made out, Gary had sighted all of the rifles in on the indoor range, and so it was just a matter of making fine adjustments. They hauled the 12 M1A's, the 6 Mini-14's, the 6 9422's and the .357 magnum to the pickup. Gary all but collapsed in his easy chair and Ron went down to the armory for a battle pack of .308, plus several boxes of 5.56, .22LR and a box of .357 magnum ammo. Gary grabbed his ear protectors and they headed to the new range.

Ron pulled up to the 100-yard stake and parked the pickup. They got out, set up the folding table and two folding chairs Ron had in the back of the pickup and started to sight in the rifles. Ron went first and Gary called his shots through the spotting scope. After each FAL was sighted in at 100 yards, Ron drove down to the target to put pasties over the holes.

It took about an hour to sight in Ron's six FAL's at 100-yards. They traded places and for the next four hours, Gary sighted in his 25 rifles. They replaced the targets and moved everything back to the 300-yard stake. Gary fine-tuned the Mini-14's and M1A's at 300-yards and Ron did the same with his FAL's. It only took them a little over two hours this time.

Without scopes, it was getting hard for Gary to see the targets. They decided to call it a day and returned to Gary's house. They had a little belated lunch and Ron began to haul the thirty rifles down to the armory. When he was done, Gary joined him and they spent the next several hours cleaning the rifles. By the time they were done and had made it upstairs, Sharon and Linda were fit to be tied. The men were informed that they were going to Holbrook for dinner. They had spent 10 hours shooting and cleaning and it was 6:30pm. The Mexican restaurant would do nicely Linda and Sharon informed them.

Ron and Gary spent a lot of time at the outdoor range during May and by the 5th of June when Gary finally received his May distribution from the trust fund they were getting to be fair shots with the battle rifles. When the distribution came in, Gary filed the tax returns, paid a large amount on the line of credit and kept back sufficient money to last them until the next trust distribution.

He bought four feeder cattle from a local rancher, and set them loose to graze on the grass. He had enough money for Littletree to erect a garage for the beater and his truck. He also bought a water tank and a pickup load of steel fence posts and several rolls of wire and on the weekends, Jim and his cousins put in a water line to the water tank, drove the posts and strung the wire. When the July distribution came in, Gary bought the remaining posts and wire that Jim needed to finish the fence plus wood posts and a gate and had Jim erect a simple shelter for the animals.

Ron and Gary talked about the food supplies and Ron bought a 21 cubic foot chest type freezer from Sears. Gary was glad he had his put in before the subbasement was closed in; it must have been a pain for those deliverymen to get it to Ron's basement. Ron had Jim take the freezer the rest of the way to his subbasement; the Sears deliverymen didn't need to know about the shelters.

Ron bought two sides of beef from the same guy Gary had gotten the side of beef and box of pork loins from. They had a 2-month's supply of food for 36 people or a 6-month's supply for 4. He asked Sharon to do two more 1-month menus for 36 people and if they had the money, to fill the orders. She did and they didn't. There was enough of a distribution coming in August to buy the food, though. She told Gary it would have to wait until August, but that there would be enough money then to buy the food and pay a little on the line-of-credit.

One evening, Gary got bored with TV, didn't feel like reading and decided to go down to the shelter. When he got to the shelter, he went from room to room just looking and trying to imagine what it would be like filled with people. When he got to the bedroom he'd had Jim build for him, he opened the door to an empty room. He'd been so completely tied up with other things that he had simply forgotten to get a bed and dresser for their bedroom.

As he stood there looking at the bare walls, he realized he hadn't put in a medical facility and didn't have any medical supplies. Maybe this room would work as a medical facility and Sharon and he could use the second bedroom. "Let's see," he thought, "I could have Jim put in a counter on the wall here next to the door and we could put in anywhere from 4 to 6 beds. Hmm, I wonder where I can get medical supplies? Maybe I'd better think about making friends with one of those EMT's in Holbrook."

Gary went back up to his office and got on the Internet. After a bit of searching, he found a place in Connecticut, Savelives dot com that sold everything he could ever use. Some of the stuff required prescriptions, but he thought maybe he could handle that problem. Maybe he could buy a pair of surplus bunk beds, and disconnect them and use pipe to get them higher off the floor and have Jim build some cabinets. Well, it had possibilities. The next day, he talked it over with Ron. Ron thought it was a really good idea and urged Gary to go ahead and do it. That evening, he went over to Jim's and knocked on the door.

“Gary. What brings you here?” Jim asked.

“Jim, I decided to convert that bedroom in the shelter into a medical facility,” Gary explained, “I thought that I’d talk to you about cabinets.”

“Man, I’m swamped with work at the moment Gary,” Jim said, “Why don’t you get some prefabricated cabinets and I can just install them for you?”

“Fine.” Gary said sharply, his tone said anything but “fine”, and left.

Most people, regardless of who they are, have buttons. Even the minister at your church has a button. It might be hard to push the button, but it’s there, just waiting for some unsuspecting person to push it. When he was younger, Gary’s buttons were pretty hard to push, but as he’d gotten older, sicker, more tired, his buttons had lost some of their resiliency. Jim had just pushed Gary’s button.

One thing that was consistent about Gary was how he reacted when someone pushed his button. He clammed up, sulked if you will, and wouldn’t talk to anyone whether they had been involved in the button pushing incident or not. Usually it took Gary about 3 days to get over his mad. In rare cases, the mad lasted up to a week and this was one of those cases.

Ron came over the next day to visit with Gary about something. About three words into the conversation, he realized that his old pal was on one of his mads so he dropped whatever it was that he wanted to talk to Gary about and went back home; Gary was always over the mad in 3 days. After the appropriate time had passed, Ron again approached Gary, having finally remembered what he had wanted to talk to him about in the first place. Gary was still angry. Ron decided that this foolishness had gone on long enough and confronted Gary.

“What’s got you so po’d?” Ron demanded.

“Nothing,” Gary said.

“Bull,” Ron replied, “I’ve seen you like this before. This has gone on long enough, who said it and what did they say?”

“I just went over and asked Jim to put in some cabinets in the bedroom in the shelter,” Gary said.

“And, what did Jim say?” Ron pressed.

“He said, and I quote, ‘Man, I’m swamped with work at the moment Gary; why don’t you get some prefabricated cabinets and I can just install them for you?’”

“So what’s wrong with that?” Ron asked.

"It just po'd me," Gary replied, "I done a lot of extra things for the guy and what the hell do I know about picking out kitchen cabinets and..."

Ron cut Gary off. "All right butthead," Ron said, "Now we know the symptoms, but what's the disease? I mean hell, when you go off like this, something else is always behind it and what you appear to be mad about isn't what you're actually angry over."

"I guess it's just the whole money thing, Ron," Gary admitted. "I figured that there would be enough money out of the trust fund to build my dream home. Well it's almost built and I'm short on money and I've had to pay for a couple of mistakes along the way. I was down in the shelter the other night looking at the bedroom and got to thinking that it would make a perfect small medical facility. So I went over to talk to Jim..."

"And he didn't say what you wanted to hear," Ron laughed out loud.

"Yeah, well, I guess," Gary admitted.

"Why did you want him to build cabinets?" Ron asked.

"I figured that it would be cheaper than buying them," Gary explained.

"Gary, there a huge Home Depot down in Mesa," Ron said, "I saw it when we went down to get the Mark II's and silencers. Why don't you and I drive down there tomorrow, load up some cabinets and bring them back? I'm sure that Jim will get them installed in no time."

"Well, ok," Gary replied, reluctant to give up on his mad.

Ron got a tablet and tape measure from Sharon and went down and measured the bedroom. He could see what Gary had in mind and it made a lot of sense to put in a medical facility. He'd even bet that Gary intended to put cabinets on the short wall next to the door and some surplus bunk beds in. This was how well Ron knew his best friend Gary. Ron went back upstairs and told Gary to be ready to travel at 6 am. Before Gary could protest, he was out the door.

"Sharon, would you go on the Internet and order a pair of the bunk beds?" Gary asked. "There is a bookmark under Used Furniture for the place that I bought the others."

"Sure dear," Sharon replied, happy to see Gary out of his crappy mood.

At 6 am the next morning, Ron honked his horn. Gary was waiting and they headed to Phoenix the back way as Gary called it. Ron knew right where the Home Depot was and he drove straight to it. They went inside and found the counter where the Home Depot employees designed your kitchen. Gary explained what he wanted to the man and the man asked about the measurements.

Ron dug out the paper he'd written them on and they decided to go with a 12' counter-top and some overhead cabinets as well as the cabinet bases. They had prefabricated 12' countertops in stock so Ron pulled around to the loading dock while Gary paid for the purchases. Loaded up and ready to drive back to Holbrook, Ron offered to buy Gary lunch. Gary showed him where the Perkins was that he liked so well and Ron bought Gary his favorite Perkins meal, the Club Sandwich with fries. By the time they were back to the ranch, Gary was almost in a good mood.

Ron saw that Jim was home so he went over and asked Jim to get the truck unloaded and set the stuff in the shelter bedroom. Jim got his two cousins and they hauled the cabinets down to the bedroom. Ron slipped down to the shelter and explained everything that had happened with Gary to Jim.

Jim hadn't realized that he'd even set Gary off. He told his cousins to go get their tools and asked Ron where Gary wanted the counters installed. Ron showed him and in 2 hours, the cabinets were done. He winked at Ron on the way out and Ron told Gary they needed to go see about the cabinets in the bedroom. They went down to the shelter and Gary opened the bedroom door to show Ron how he wanted the cabinets installed. He flicked on the light switch and almost dropped the cup of coffee he was carrying. The cabinets were installed exactly as he had envisioned.

Ron grabbed him by the arm and walked him over to the nearest bunkroom. They pulled two of the top beds and moved them to the new medical facility. If it had had the supplies, it would have been ready to go. Well almost. Ron went back to the bunkroom and picked up the eight pipe sections that were used to join the beds into bunks. They added the pipe sections to the legs of two of the beds and checked the height.

"I'd say that if we cut about 6" off those pipes, the beds would be at the perfect height," Ron suggested, "What do you think?"

"I think you're right," Gary confirmed. "I have extra pipe sections."

"There you go partner," Ron laughed, please to see Gary back to his normal self. "I'll run those pipes up to Holbrook tomorrow and get them cut to length and smoothed up."

Gary checked with Sharon before he went to the website. She had completely forgotten to order the bunk beds. He didn't care, stuff happens. He went ahead and ordered the bunks and the replacement pipe sections. He then went to the Save Lives website and ordered all of the medical supplies that he could get without a prescription.

The next morning Gary played phone tag trying to track down his old family physician in Northridge. When they finally connected, he explained what he wanted and why he wanted it. Dr. J took a bit of convincing, but Gary got almost everything he wanted. The Doctor refused his request for morphine and a couple of other prescription drugs, but

Gary had 95% of what he wanted. The drugs would be shipped COD from a Los Angeles Medical Supply house.

The big things that he wanted were the Normal Saline and Lactated Ringer's IV solutions and the IV administration sets. Two weeks later, the COD order arrived from Los Angeles. Gary had the cash on hand to pay for the order. Apparently Dr. J had changed his mind on some of the items that he'd told Gary he wouldn't fill. Everything Gary wanted except for Epinephrine was in the box including the Morphine Sulfate. There was also an assortment of disposable syringes and needles. There were also some medical books. The following day they received a letter from Dr. J. It said:

Gary,

I went ahead and filled everything you asked for. I am enclosing an Rx for the Epinephrine and Tetracycline. They're only good for a year. Have the pharmacy call me and I'll order a refill for you when it expires. I always told you that you should have been a Doctor. Don't let me down.

Bill

The bunk beds and replacement pipes arrived the same day. Jim got them to the shelter and they reassembled the bunk beds. The 4-bed hospital ward was almost ready to go. Gary and Ron drove into Holbrook that afternoon and picked up 8 bottles of oxygen. Gary already had the regulators from Save Lives. They put a bottle of oxygen by each bed and stored the 4 extras in the storage room. Gary had no intention of playing Doctor. He went over to Jim's and asked Jim if he knew any of the EMT's or Paramedics in Holbrook.

"I sure do Gary," Jim said, "Why do you ask?"

"I've gotten all of the medical supplies for the clinic I set up Jim," Gary explained, "But I'm no doctor. I'd like to get an EMT or Paramedic on call for the Shelter."

"How would you like to have a Paramedic living here?" Jim asked.

Gary was almost speechless. "I uh, uh." He started, "Uh, yeah!"

"I was going to come over and talk to you about it anyway," Jim said, "My cousin, a paramedic, just got married. He and his wife bought a used mobile home, but it's at the same lot we got evicted from. He's looking for a place to set his home."

"What are you waiting for," Gary laughed, "Call him, please. And after you talk to him, make a sign for over the driveway, would you? Put, 'The Res' on it."

Jim made the call. His cousin, one of many cousins Jim had, would have the trailer towed to the ranch the next day. Jim got out a 2'x12' plank and painted it white. Tomorrow-

row night he'd paint **The Res** on it. Gary had a pretty good sense of humor when he wasn't being a jerk. The next day Jim and his cousins took off from work early. They leveled his cousin's trailer and while his men put in two 6'x6' posts and poured some premixed concrete to hold them in place, Jim finished the sign. Someday he planned to explain to Gary that all Indians were his cousins.

The shelter was 10 months worth of food for 36 people away from being complete. That was partially resolved with the next big deposit Gary received in his Iowa checking account from the trust. He had the diesel and propane tanks topped off. Sharon and Linda worked out two more of the 1-month menus for 36 people and ordered 4 months worth of food. They had enough food for 36 people for 6 months. The next large deposit would see the food brought up to the desired level, 12 months for 36 people.

Only in America – Chapter 7 – The Storm

It was getting close to the really good time of the year when the trust paid fairly well and the credit line was quickly getting paid down. Gary suggested to Sharon that Linda and she make up 6 more monthly menus. Sharon figured the 6 they already had were pretty good so she confirmed that with Linda. Linda absolutely agreed.

Ask either one of the men what they had to eat two nights before and they had to think about it for 5 minutes anyway. Sharon waited a day and told Gary she had the menus ready. Gary told her to order the food; he wanted the shelters done. It was getting close to Derek getting back from Kosovo, too. Gary called Mary and suggested that once Derek was back and settled in, they come to visit their new home in Holbrook. Mary didn't know, Derek would have to get back to work pretty quickly, but they would try.

The conflict in Iraq was turning into a real quagmire. For whatever reason everyone started to come out of the woodwork in the Sunni Triangle. There were the remnants of ousted Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein's Baath Party raising hell, foreign insurgents attacking Marines and now the private army of that nobody mullah from Najaf, al-Sadr, was also attacking the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force.

Bush had been forced to send the 82nd Airborne Division back into the Triangle to support the Marines. There was talk of increasing the American force to as many as 250,000 soldiers and Marines. What had started in May as an open confrontation by the Iraqis against the 1st MEF had become less open; after the marines had killed several hundred of the insurgents, the Iraqis reverted to a form of Guerilla warfare, striking in small numbers, hitting and running.

Gary and Sharon went over to Ron and Linda's for dinner. Ron had thawed some steaks and was going to cook out. The date was November 3, 2004. Ron and Gary were standing on the patio while Ron worked his magic on the steaks.

"I had them top off the diesel tank, Ron," Gary said, "And the propane. We didn't need much of either, but I think that's it better to keep them full. I had them haul the last of the fill dirt and filled in that new ravine. It hasn't deepened at all, so I thought I'd take a chance. Maybe with the grass on it, it won't erode anymore."

"Could be, only time will tell," Ron replied. "Have you decided who you're going to vote for next Tuesday?"

"I think maybe I'll vote for Bush again," Gary said, "I've never seen an election like this. Neither candidate has a clear majority in the polls. I'm going for the devil I know rather than the devil I don't."

"Yeah, me too," Ron acknowledged fussing with the steaks.

"We're going to have all of the kids for Thanksgiving this year," Gary reported, "It's only

a 15 hour drive for any of them and I told them I'd pay the gas and we'd put them up."

Ron smiled, "Our kids are all going to be here too. They're coming for both Thanksgiving and Christmas."

"Derek quit the Iowa National Guard," Gary said, "He heard a rumor about their maybe going to Iraq and he flat quit."

"I'll bet you're relieved over that," Ron said.

"I sure am," Gary admitted. "It was bad enough when he got sent to Kosovo and TSHTF. But Iraq is a whole different story. Personally, I think they should bomb those people back into the Stone Age and just come home."

"Can't do that Gar," Ron said, "World opinion wouldn't permit it."

"I know," Gary replied, "But I still wish they'd do it. They wouldn't even have to use nukes. Remember that big bomb, what was it called, Mother Of All Bombs?"

"I know what you mean Gary," Ron said, "It was the GBU-43B, Massive Ordnance Air Burst Bomb. They first tested it down in Florida, if I remember, just about a year ago. I think the last test was just this past March after we moved here."

"Yeah, yeah," Gary smiled, "That's the one. They could drop some of those on those Iraqi cities where all of our boys are getting killed and just pack up and come home."

"That would amount to a high order of *Gunboat Diplomacy* Gar-Bear," Ron laughed shaking his head, "It's never going to happen. Let's eat, the steaks are done."

After dinner, the men went down to the supply shelter under Ron and Linda's home. The supply room holding the food and miscellaneous supplies was pretty full. They had made some last minute purchases, like 36 cases of Meals Refused by Ethiopians, a bunch of surplus web gear, a couple of reconditioned Geiger Counters, some Blackhawk equipment including Vests, plates and Camelback hydration systems.

Ron had purchased Sears best mechanics tool set for the equipment room and they had all kinds of spare parts for every piece of equipment, including their Dodges. Neither of the men were mechanics, so if the vehicles needed any repairs, they hoped someone had the skills.

They walked along the tunnel to the main shelter under Gary and Sharon's home. Gary had added a refrigerator to the medical clinic to store some of the drugs. He had a two-year supply of the 70/30 Humalin in the refrigerator. If unopened, the Humalin had a very, very long shelf life. Refrigerating it was just an added precaution. He had also put in a double-lock drug cabinet for the seriously dangerous drugs like the morphine sulfate and such.

The Paramedic, Jim's cousin had been to the little clinic and fairly marveled at how well it was equipped. He made a couple of suggestions and Gary had immediately placed an order with Save Lives. In a pinch, they could perform meatball surgery, though not even the Paramedic had that level of skills.

The kitchen was stocked with crockery and cutlery for 36 people, but there were enough more plates and silverware for another 36 people in the storage room. Unable to store things like potatoes, onions and the like, Linda and Sharon had caved in and purchased the instant and dried products. It seemed like such a waste to Gary to have all of this fancy equipment just sitting here not being used, but that was the downside of being prepared.

They had commercial bread pans, and many things not normally found in a kitchen. It wasn't like they could run to the store for a loaf of bread or a gallon of milk. Gary had just had the two larger steers butchered, cut and wrapped and he had put them in the large chest freezers. Satisfied with their preparations, the men walked back down the tunnel to Ron's shelter and climbed the stairs back to Ron's basement.

Ron's extended family included Kevin and John in Palmdale, Paula, her husband and Ron's mother in Austin, Minnesota, Jennifer and her husband and 3 kids in Ft. Smith and Brenda and her husband and their two kids, also in Ft. Smith. The total count was 16.

Gary's extended family included Amy and her husband and two kids and Lorrie and David and their 5 kids, all in Palmdale, plus Derek and Mary and their two kids in Huxley, DJ down in Missouri and Damon in Mason City and his three kids in Garner. The total count was 22. Thus the total extended families came to a total of 38 people, including the babies.

The five families living in the trailer park added more people. Jim and Maria and their two kids, cousin number 1 with his wife and 3 kids, cousin number 2 with his wife and two kids, cousin number 3 and his wife, brought the possible shelter count from 38 to 53. Jim Thomas and his wife would make another 4 people, increasing the count to 57. Even though they only had food for 36 people for a year, there was more than enough to get the whole group through for several months.

Unable to make a totally accurate calculation, Gary and Ron had each put 18 bunk beds in the men's dorm and 18 bunk beds in the women's dorm. The rooms were large enough to permit a minor shifting of beds from one dorm to the other to accommodate the actual distribution of the sexes. He had thought to put in 6 cribs in the women's dorm, just in case. Ron and he had also laid in a supply of Real Tree desert patterned jump suits and an assortment of T-shirts, boxers and women's underwear. Bras were so expensive that they'd limited the assortment to just a few sizes; Linda and Sharon had taken care of that. If they didn't have the right size for a woman guest, she'd just have to go braless.

Neither man expected that things would go to hell before next year. They were wrong. The day before Thanksgiving is one of the heaviest days for air travel in the US. People are traveling to spend Thanksgiving with loved ones and the lines were long in normal times. Bush had won the election by a narrower margin than in 2000, if that were possible. It looked like the Supreme Court was going to elect another President.

Several Iraqis had slipped into the US in late October, just in case Bush won the election. Their plan was simple; they would sneak bombs aboard American airliners and blow them from the sky. The Department of Homeland Security, having caught wind of the plot, had increased the security level to Orange for the Thanksgiving holiday. Despite all of the extra precautions, the explosives detectors, the explosive sniffing dogs, and long delays at the airports due to extra screening, more than half of the terrorists managed to get aboard their flights and their explosive luggage was safely stored in the belly of the planes.

The bombers were but the first wave of a multi-pronged attack. Those WMD's that Saddam didn't have were retrieved from their caretakers in Syria by minor members of the Baath Party and smuggled into the USA. The weapons included the chemical weapons that Saddam had used so effectively against the Kurds and a new, untested, biological weapon.

It was irrelevant that there was no antidote for the virus; the warriors were prepared to give their life to Allah. The chemical weapons were planted in airports and subways. The virus was transported to various locations around the US that would take advantage of the winds that normally flowed from the west to the east. The day before Thanksgiving, while their children were in route for the holiday festivities, the terrorists struck.

President Bush was in Crawford when the first reports of planes falling from the sky began to flood in. He immediately ordered the grounding of all flights and put the military on DEFCON 3. Even though the planes in the air were diverted to the nearest airport, that didn't prevent the remaining terrorists aboard the few death planes still flying from detonating their explosives. In all, 66 planes were blown from the sky.

Had the other 54 terrorists made it aboard their planes, a total of 120 planes would have fallen. The chemical weapons in the airports and subways were on remote detonators. The second group of terrorists safely detonated their chemical weapons from a distance and thousands more died as the Sarin gas filled the airports and subways.

One of the world's most dangerous chemical warfare agents. Sarin is an extremely toxic substance that disrupts the nervous system, overstimulating muscles and vital organs. It can be inhaled as a gas or absorbed through the skin. In high doses, Sarin suffocates its victims by paralyzing the muscles around their lungs. One hundred milligrams of Sarin – about one drop – can kill the average person in a few minutes if he or she's not given an antidote. Experts say Sarin is more than 500 times as toxic as cyanide. The Sarin

imported into the US by the Iraqis was not the poor grade product used by the Japanese in the 1995 subway attack. It was full-strength, weapons-grade Sarin, produced by Saddam's chemists.

The biological component, an airborne virus of unknown lineage, could survive for up to 30 days after being released. The terrorists released the virus along the west coast in the cities of Los Angeles, San Francisco, Portland and Seattle. It was also released in Phoenix, Albuquerque, Las Vegas, Salt Lake City, Denver, Dallas-Ft. Worth, Huston, Oklahoma City, Minneapolis, Chicago, New Orleans, Miami, Memphis, Columbus, Detroit, Philadelphia, New York City, Washington DC, Richmond and Atlanta.

The virus drifted on the wind, infecting millions of people in the first hours after its release. In the coming days, as it drifted eastward, it would infect millions more. The virus produced respiratory symptoms within 24-hours of exposure. It was more virulent than Ebola in some ways, and 90% of everyone exposed to it died within 96 hours or less.

Bush was beside himself. Sixty-six airliners had fallen from the sky, some after he'd ordered all flights grounded. News had reached him of the Sarin attacks in the major airports and the subway systems of the major cities. He still had to learn of the viral attack and wouldn't know of it for 48-hours. Homeland Security had begun to tentatively identify the terrorists; they appeared to be Iraqis and perhaps some members of al-Qaeda, Ridge's people weren't sure.

CNN, Fox and the other networks preempted all programming and the only story on TV was the news of the attacks. The networks quickly generated graphics depicting the aircraft that had been exploded, and the subway attacks. Gary and Ron began to receive cell phone calls from their children and they told the kids to put the pedal to the metal and get their butts to Holbrook post-haste.

Gary went to Jim and Maria's and told Jim to get all of his cousins and their families to the shelter. He was about to call Jim Thomas when Thomas and his family showed up at the ranch. Most of the kids had left early and Ron's kids were past Albuquerque before the virus was released. They were the first to arrive.

Derek and Damon had rented a van and they arrived a few minutes after Brenda and Jennifer. Paula and her husband and Ron's mother had flown to Phoenix before the groundings and had followed the map Ron had sent them for the back way drive from Sky Harbor to Holbrook. They arrived almost the same time as Damon and Derek. Kevin and John had taken Ron's advice and had pushed the car up to almost 100 mph between Flagstaff and Holbrook.

Saturday morning the first hints of the viral attack were reported on CNN. About an hour later Fox picked up the story and speculation began to run rampant. Great Britain, France and several other countries had grounded their air fleets just hours after Bush had grounded all American carriers. They didn't really have a choice anyway, the Sarin gas had hit most of the airports serving foreign countries and the airports were waste-

lands of dead people. Had the terrorists timed their attacks differently, perhaps releasing the viral component a day earlier, the virus would have spread worldwide.

Bush had ordered all American troops withdrawn from Afghanistan, Iraq, Haiti, Korea and Kosovo. Best estimates were that if they left their equipment in place, it would take 3-5 weeks to evacuate the troops. Bush had no intention of leaving the American equipment to the foreign governments. He ordered the entire American fleet to sea the moment the attacks began. The fleets had sortied in record time and by the time the virus had spread to Norfolk, Bremerton, San Diego and the other US naval ports, the ships were already at sea.

He told the military commanders that he didn't care how they managed it, get all Americans out of the identified countries. They could be transported to Germany, Great Britain, Japan, and to other American installations around the world. Bush had also ordered the entire stock of GBU-43B MOAB's transported to Diego Garcia.

The BLU-82B/C-130 weapon system, nicknamed Commando Vault, is the high altitude delivery of a 15,000-pound bomb from a C-130. This system depends upon the accurate positioning of the aircraft by either a fixed ground radar or onboard navigation equipment. The ground radar controller or aircrew navigator as applicable is responsible for positioning the aircraft prior to final countdown and release. Primary aircrew considerations include accurate ballistic and wind computations provided by the navigator, and precision instrument flying with strict adherence to controller instructions. The minimum altitude for release due to blast effects of the weapon is 6,000 feet AGL.

The BLU-82 [Bomb Live Unit-82] is a 15,000-pound bomb originally designed to clear helicopter landing zones in Vietnam. The warhead contains 12,600 pounds of GSX [Gelled Slurry Explosive] slurry. Gelled slurry explosives are prepared by forming a slurry of combinations of different ingredients. After this material has gelled, it is detonated by a high explosive booster. Slurry explosives are used in mining where formations to be fractured are wet, very dense, or strong.

Slurries are very inexpensive compared with conventional military explosives and much easier to load into large casings. With slurry, filling a bomb is merely a matter of pouring the material into the casing. The slurry can be stored in non-explosive component form and turned into field-manufactured explosive as it is needed. Slurries, sometimes called water gels, contain ammonium nitrate partly in aqueous solution. Adding powdered aluminum as a sensitizer to slurries greatly increases the heat of explosion or the energy release. Aluminized slurries have been used in extremely hard rock with excellent results.

The bomb is detonated above ground level by a 38-inch fuse extender, optimized to clear vegetation while creating no crater. Nicknamed "Big Blue 82", the weapon is frequently and incorrectly referred to as "Daisy Cutter", a term which more properly applies to the fuse assembly for above-ground bursts. The US exhausted its supply in the early stages of Iraqi Freedom.

The GBU-43/B is large, powerful and accurately delivered. The 21,700-pound bomb contains 18,700 pounds of high explosive. It is 30 feet long with a diameter of 40.5 inches. The warhead is a blast-type warhead. It was developed in only nine weeks to be available for the Iraq campaign, but it was not used.

The US Air Force has developed the 21,000-lb. [9,500 kilogram], satellite-guided Massive Ordnance Air Blast Bombs (MOAB) as a successor to the 15,000-lb. "Daisy Cutters" used in Vietnam and Afghanistan. The Air Force is said to call MOABs (pronounced MOE-ab) the mother of all bombs. As with the earlier Daisy Cutter, these huge bombs are dropped out of the rear of the C-130 cargo plane.

Unlike the Daisy Cutter, the MOAB is released without the use of a parachute. As a result, the aircraft releasing the bomb can fly at higher altitudes, thus making it safer for US pilots. This replacement for the BLU-82 bomb uses more of the slurry of ammonium nitrate and powdered aluminum used in the BLU-82. Other reports indicate that the MOAB might use tritonal explosive as opposed to the gelled slurry explosive of the BLU-82. It actually used H6.

The US had used nuclear weapons for the first time in World War II as an offensive weapon. Bush had no intention of being the second President to use nuclear weapons. The large conventional explosives would have to do. They were nearly as destructive as the smaller nuclear weapons anyway and didn't quite generate the hysteria that nuclear weapons produced.

He bided his time; the US would strike back soon. The Secret Service had bundled the President and key members of the government up in biological hazard suits and had moved as many as possible to Mt. Weather. Somehow, Republicans got preferential treatment and more than a few Democrats, like Chuckie, Hillary, Teddy, and others managed to contract the virus before they could be suited up and rescued. Somehow in the hurried up affair, John McCain got missed, too.

In Holbrook, the shelters had been buttoned up tight the minute the last of the families had arrived. Some of Jim Thomas's employees who had worked on the shelters also turned up and were admitted. The last family in was Nichols and his wife and kids from the gun store in Holbrook. No one had told Nichols about the shelter, but he'd put 2 and 2 together and when he and his wife and kids showed up, neither Ron nor Gary could turn them away. Nichols hadn't brought any food, but he had taken time to load all of the guns and ammo in his store into a 2½-ton truck. His two sons, strapping teenagers aged 17 and 18, had made short work of loading and unloading the truck.

The phones and electricity remained up for several days, but eventually, when the virus hit the power plant employees at Cholla, the lights went out. The automatic transfer switches kicked in and the emergency backup battery operated lights had barely clicked on before the generators came to life and the backup lights went back out.

Ron, Gary and most of the men were glued to the TV in the Recreation room. The news reports flooded the airwaves for the first few days, then slowed to a trickle and finally stopped and the newscasters and the staffs at the major news centers succumbed to the virus.

The only news now came from Gary's Icom IC8500 receiver, which was turned to BBC. According to the British, as fast as the Americans were pulled out of a country, C-130's were seen dropping large conventional explosives. There were no estimates of the American death toll and the virus had spread to Canada and Mexico, taking a major bite out of the populations of those countries as well.

The US military, stationed in the continental US, had MOPPED up and gone underground to the extent possible. The MOPP suits were only good for two weeks against radiation and the military made shelter their first order of business. Bush hadn't bothered to declare martial law, realizing that bringing the troops out of shelter would risk their lives to no good end.

Although the virus had a mortality rate of 90%, far fewer than 90% of the American population died. Ron and Gary weren't the only survivalists in the country and the military was safe enough for the moment. BBC was now speculating that 40% of the Canadian population, 60% of the US population and 80% or more of the Mexican populations had succumbed to the virus.

Gary walked into the Recreation room from the dining room where he had just had his 10th cup of coffee for the day.

"What's the word, Ron?" he asked.

"BBC is speculating that 40% of the Canadian population, 60% of the US population and 80% or more of the Mexican populations had succumbed to the virus," Ron replied shaking his head. "Bush is blasting the crap out of the ragheads using conventional explosives, too. From the sounds of it, if you aren't with us, you're against us and Bush is taking out the populations of whole cities."

"Do you know who I feel the sorriest for?" Gary asked, "All of those soldiers overseas who had families at home. They went off expecting that if anyone were to be killed it would be them and that their families would be safe back home."

"Funny you should mention that," Ron said, "Apparently, Bush ordered the military to get as many of the dependant families sheltered up as possible. It might not be as bad as you are suggesting."

"He did?" Gary replied, "I'm glad to hear that. Any word on a possible cure for the virus?"

"Nope," Ron reported, "But it's beginning to die out. The Brits are reporting that it proba-

bly only had a life of a few days or weeks and is dying out naturally.”

“Was it confined to North America, or has it spread around the world?” Gary continued to grill his friend.

“They shut down international flights so fast that there haven’t been any cases reported overseas yet,” Ron explained.

“What about ships on the high seas?” Gary asked.

“Well, if anyone was infected, most of the population of the ships must have succumbed to the virus, I suppose,” Ron said. “Bush is trying to get radio and TV back up according to BBC, but for the moment, hasn’t been able to do so. So the only news from our government is coming from Great Britain.”

“Oh?” Gary asked, surprised.

“Yeah,” Ron explained, “Bush is in contact with Blair and Blair is releasing news to BBC.”

“Well, it’s only been 4 weeks,” Gary said, “I suppose that we’d better stay buttoned up for a couple of more weeks, at least.”

Jim’s cousin, the paramedic had been listening to Ron and Gary’s conversation.

“What do you fellas have that we can use to decontaminate with?” he asked.

“I have several gallons of Cavicide and several gallons of Envirocide,” Gary said.

“Hell those are the same thing,” the paramedic, Johnny Bighawk laughed, “Why did you buy both?”

“I don’t know,” Gary said, “They had different prices so I figured that they had different ingredients.”

“Nope. The only difference is the bottles,” Johnny replied. “How many gallons do you have?”

“Sixteen. Eight gallons of each product,” Gary reported, “Is that enough?”

“That’s more than enough,” Johnny said. “Do you have any biohazard suits?”

“Yes. I have a dozen Advantage Pro Coveralls with Elastic Wrist and Ankles that include the attached Hood and Boots,” Gary answered.

“You seem to be pretty well prepared Gary,” Johnny said, “What do you have for

masks?"

"I've got 2 boxes of the N-100's and a couple of cases of the N-95's," Gary answered.

"I agree that we should wait 2 more weeks," Johnny said, "Then, I'll get out and disinfect the exterior of the shelter and work my way to the surface, disinfecting as I go."

"Hey Dad," Derek yelled, "I've got some guy named Fleataxi up on the 2-meter relay asking for you."

Gary went to the radio room.

"Hi David," he said, "This is better than any of the fiction we ever wrote for Frugal Squirrel's Patriot Fiction. How did you make out up there in Northern Nevada?"

"I'm tying up a whole bunch of repeaters, so I need to keep this short!" David said, "We're fine. We went to ground the minute everything hit. How are you doing?"

"We're doing fine David," Gary replied. "Why didn't you get a 10-meter rig like I advised?"

"Not all of us are rich like some people I know," David laughed.

"There's always room for you and your wife down here, if you can make it," Gary replied.

"We're ok for the moment, so I'm going to sit tight," David came back. "Anyway, we'd have to go through Salt Lake City to get there and I don't relish the idea of that, just yet; besides our friend owns 40 acres with a well, Solar/Wind power, and a small garden so we're sitting pretty good for now, until the food runs out!"

"Get yourself a 10-meter rig and we can keep in direct touch," Gary advised.

"Hey, ever heard "Thou Shalt Not Steal?" David replied.

"David, I am as religious as the next guy," Gary laughed, "But somehow, I doubt that getting on your knees is going to get you a 10-meter rig."

"You might be surprised," David said. "I'll contact you in a few days."

"Who was that?" Derek asked.

"Another fella that writes Survival fiction," Gary said. "He just got his technician's license a while back and bought himself a 2-meter handi talkie."

"Two meters is only line of sight," Derek said, "How did he contact you all the way from Elko?"

“I don’t know Derek,” Gary said, “Maybe there are more 2-meter linkups than either of us knew about. Anyway, I glad to know that he made it. I wonder how many of the other Frugal Squirrels were prepared and made it, too?”

“Probably more than you think Dad,” Derek said.

Gary returned to the Recreation room to finish his conversation with Ron and Johnny, but both men were gone. He took a Benadryl and headed to the kitchen for another cup of coffee, his 11th for the day; someone had just made a fresh pot, it really smelled great. Gary had been ignoring his food allergies for years. He was allergic to caffeine, onions, peanuts, eggs and one of the secret ingredients in Coke. According to an article he’d read on Medscape:

Antihistamines and epinephrine can both be useful in treating cases of acute allergic reactions to medications. If this is the first reaction to a medication, it is important to closely monitor the patient for several hours because allergic reactions can begin with mild symptoms, such as hives or itching, and later progress to include more-severe manifestations affecting the respiratory or cardiovascular systems. For initial reactions limited to the skin, it makes sense to administer an antihistamine, such as diphenhydramine, and then closely monitor for the appearance of other symptoms.

It is important to emphasize that although antihistamines can relieve skin symptoms, such as itching and urticaria, they are not effective in treating anaphylactic episodes involving the respiratory or cardiovascular systems. Therefore, the patient should be carefully assessed for symptoms of anaphylaxis and then reevaluated periodically for several hours. If there are signs or symptoms of anaphylaxis, epinephrine should be administered intramuscularly, and transport to an acute care facility for other supportive care should be arranged.

If the patient has had previous adverse reactions to the same medication, it is important to ask about the severity of the reactions after these exposures. If the patient has a history of cardiovascular or respiratory symptoms after exposures in the past, this could modify the treatment approach. Under these circumstances, immediate use of epinephrine and transport to an acute care facility should be considered, even if the reaction appears to be relatively mild.

Diphenhydramine, Benadryl, to the average guy, had been his lifesaver. Urticaria, or more commonly known as the hives, had been a part of his life since the day after Thanksgiving in 1986. Man, that was 18 years he’d been suffering with the itching. It was a wonder he had any skin left at all. He looked at his arms. Anymore when he scratched, it caused massive bruising. Most of his arms were purple.

Only in America – Chapter 8 – After The Storm

Ron had noticed Gary scratching and saw the purple arms.

“Why don’t you just give up drinking coffee?” he asked.

“It’s one of the few pleasures I have left in Life, Ronald McDonald,” Gary retorted.

“You could always drink decaf, you know,” Ron insisted.

“I tried that for a while,” Gary admitted, “I got used to it but Sharon couldn’t. Then, Cost-co stopped selling Folgers decaf and we went back to regular coffee.”

“Sometimes you’re such an idiot,” Ron said, “I saw coffee pots with orange handles. Is there any decaf in the store room?”

“I suppose,” Gary said.

“Well, why don’t you go see?” Ron suggested. “If we have some decaf, I’d bet that several people would prefer it to regular coffee.”

“Ok,” Gary said and headed for the storeroom. There were 4 cases, 12 cans to the case, of decaf Folgers coffee. He grabbed a case and lugged it back to the kitchen. He made a pot of decaf and hung up a small sign that said, ‘Orange pots contains decaf’.” When the pot of decaf was ready, Gary poured himself a cup. Tasted the same as regular coffee to him. He went back to get a second cup and the pot was empty. He guessed that it was a good thing that they had 48 cans, at least it would last them until they could start scavenging.

Gary and Ron had always figured that if TSHTF, they would end up scavenging, if they survived. A person could only store so much food and fuel. Fortunately with Ron’s experience at AmeriGas, they could transfer propane to their tanks for as long as the propane supply in Holbrook held out. Food might be a different matter. On his short want list, Gary had a tractor, plow, disc, and tiller. Money had run too low to allow him the luxury of acquiring those items. Besides, if they did survive, they could always rescue some from someone who hadn’t survived.

When the two additional weeks had passed Johnny suited up and left the shelter, liberally applying the disinfectant as he went. It wasn’t needed, but Johnny didn’t know that. He spent most of a day disinfecting the outside of the shelter, the stairwell, Gary’s basement and home. Several of the cousins suited up the next day and they disinfecting the mobile homes and Ron and Linda’s home, basement, stairwell and shelter entrance. What was a human life worth? An investment of less than \$200 thousand had spared the lives of over 70 people. From one perspective, that made human life pretty cheap at a little over \$2,800 a copy.

It was time to start salvage operations and on January 27, 2005 they did just that. They still had almost 25,000 gallons of propane so that wasn't their highest order of business. The diesel tank had almost the full 40,000 gallons, too. Jim and the cousins had gas powered pickups, so they 'traded-in' their old pickups for new diesel powered pickups. "Trade-in' was defined as parking their old pickups at the Dodge dealer and driving off in a new, diesel powered pickup after they'd located the keys to the vehicle of their choice.

The 2½-ton truck that Nichols had shown up in was a diesel so they were ok there. His boys borrowed two more diesel pickups for the family. They drove all of the trucks to the Safeway store and loaded them up. There had been a little run on the store, but less than Gary or Ron had presumed. At this rate, they would have to make several trips to haul all of the food.

They hadn't found a single living soul in Holbrook. They had, however spotted several large trucks and the next day, they got everyone crammed into a single pickup and rescued the abandoned trucks before they finished cleaning out the Safeway store. These men had families to provide for and there wasn't going to be any employment, per se, in the near future.

For the next 3 weeks, they scoured Holbrook, going from home to home. They located canning jars, lids, pressure cookers, seeds, canned good, firearms, clothing; the list would cover many pages. They cleaned out all the lumber they could find and Jim and the cousins built shelters to hold the food and other things that wouldn't fit in the shelters. Then, they set about to bury the dead.

According to the 2000 census, the population of Holbrook grew to 4,917. When you added the area population within a 10-minute commute, the population was over 9,000. A 30-minute commute brought the population for business and industry to draw from to more than 23,000. The men didn't check the commute populations, but they found fewer than 4,000 bodies in Holbrook.

Jim Thomas and his men graded a large mass grave and wearing the protective suits collected the bodies and buried them in the grave. The ranch had 320 of its 640 acres fenced in. They went around the area looking for any livestock and moved them to the ranch. They didn't find many living cattle, but they found some. They also found chickens and a few hogs.

The Bush administration finally got National Public Radio up and running. NPR was an internationally acclaimed producer and distributor of noncommercial news, talk, and entertainment programming. A privately supported, not-for-profit, membership organization, NPR had served more than 750 independently operated, noncommercial public radio stations.

Each member station served local listeners with a distinctive combination of national and local programming. Less than one-third of the stations were operating. Bush had abandoned any hopes of getting television up and operating in the immediate future.

With commercial radio gone, NPR filled the gap. At least their announcer reported the news instead of creating it.

Gary spent a lot of time listening to the Icom receiver. He had a Diamond D130J mounted on a standoff right around the 175' level of the 200' tower. He could pull in almost every radio station in the world. Of course, he only spoke American English, so many of the broadcasts meant nothing to him. There were some English language broadcasts, probably propaganda, coming from many countries around the world.

The world wasn't too pleased with the bombings taking place in the Middle East, but as long as the US held off on using nukes, the other governments seemed to be tolerating use of the weapons. All, that is, except the Muslim countries. They couldn't see the difference between a MOAB and a nuke. Sure, a MOAB had no radiation, but the effects of the MOAB weren't perceived as being all that different from the effects of a suitcase nuke.

This was especially true of America's new weapon, the MOAB. Detonated at a little altitude, it flattened a large area. They would have complained to the UN if there were still a UN. Instead, they protested to NATO. The Germans and French had opposed the Iraq war, but after what had been done to the 3 North American countries, the Muslim's protests fell on deaf ears.

Bush countered the claims being made by the Muslim nations, quoting a journalist named Fred Kaplan, *First, it's big, but not that big*. On the night of the test, ABC News reported that *the bomb was similar to a small nuclear weapon*. Time magazine, in strikingly similar language, reported that *it packs the punch of a small nuclear weapon*. Let's do the math. The MOAB weighs 21,000 pounds, including 18,000 pounds' worth of high explosives. That's 9 tons. The teeniest nuclear weapon in the US stockpile has the blast-power of 1,000 tons (one kiloton, in the parlance). In other words, had Time's reporter been a bit less giddy, he would have written that MOAB (which, by the way, the Air Force pronounces 'mo-ab') *packs one one-hundredth the punch of a small nuclear weapon*.

Saudi Arabia was not impressed with Bush's rhetoric. Neither were Syria and Iran. They must have figured they were next. They were right. When the remaining CIA analysts finally tracked the Sarin to Syria, Bush ordered 3 MOAB's dropped on Damascus. The CIA analysts, encouraged by that development, soon announced that some of the terrorists were associated with al-Sadr and he was reportedly tied to some radical elements in Iran. Bush was looking for an excuse and he didn't sufficiently investigate the CIA's assertions, as a prudent man may have done. He ordered the last 3 MOAB's in our inventory dropped on Tehran. The President had finally stepped squarely into a pile of manure.

So far the residents at the small ranch 20 miles from Holbrook hadn't had any contact with any other living human beings except Fleataxi. The next time he called, he had a 10-meter radio. When Gary asked him where he had come up with it, David told him

God had provided it. Gary wondered if that meant that his pal Fleataxi had gone shopping or another ham in northern Nevada had given it to him. Gary didn't ask.

Ron was suggesting that they make a trip to Phoenix to pick up some automatic weapons. Gary finally talked him out of it citing the extreme risk such a trip represented and the fact that with the guns that Nichols had hauled in from his gun shop, they didn't have any particular shortage of weapons.

Besides, Gary had said, they hadn't had any contact with anyone else, so what was the worry? They could start putting in a garden in a few more weeks, they had 10 acres plowed, disked and dragged. The potatoes that they recovered from Safeway weren't holding all that well and they could be used to plant more potatoes. They had a large variety of seeds from Holbrook and they had the heirloom seeds Gary had from Walton Feed. It was better that they should stay on the section and protect their portion of the universe.

Their first contact with other human beings came from residents returning to Holbrook. The group of between 200 and 300 people had bugged out for Carlsbad in southeastern New Mexico and had spent almost 4 months in the Carlsbad Caverns. They had expected to find plenty of food when they got home, but came home to find the Safeway and their homes looted of anything useful. The returnees were tired, hungry and pretty angry. Ron, Gary and the two Jim's gave them a large amount of food, and returned anything the residents claimed had been taken from their homes.

The ranchers had carefully inventoried every single thing they had taken from each home and so long as the returnees claim matched their inventory list, they willingly returned the items. They hadn't taken any food from the homes because that went with the residents; neither had they recovered any firearms for the same reason. They had taken some canning jars, lids, rings and pressure cookers. In a gesture of peace, they offered to share the output from their garden with the returnees.

That did the trick and pretty soon the group of nearly 400 people were getting along well. The ranchers plowed, disked and dragged another 10 acres to ensure they could keep their promise. They also provided beef, pork and chicken, although not in the quantity the returnees seemed to want. Nichols agreed to sell the returnees small quantities of ammunition from his inventory. He had a lot of calibers that only the returnees had weapons for anyway.

According to the news coming from NPR, the government had a preliminary death count. A few over 12,000 people had died in the crashes of the airliners. The Sarin gas had claimed just over 115,000 lives. The virus, the real culprit, had claimed right around 153 million lives. That put the total US deaths just a hair over 55% of the population.

The initial reports out of Canada were high, too. Canada lost 36% of its population. Mexico still didn't have any reliable figures and didn't expect to have them anytime soon. Bush's attacks on the Middle East had the largest impact on Iraq. Syria and Iran

lost a lot of citizens, but not nearly on the scale as Iraq. The surviving Democrats from Congress, though few in number, were calling for an investigation of how the terrorists had slipped by Homeland Security and into Bush's use of the huge conventional weapons in such a 'haphazard' manner.

The American troops and their equipment were being returned to the US with all the assets the government could muster. Some countries even pitched in and helped, they wanted the Americans gone before the Muslims began to blame them for America's actions and began to attack their countries.

The flow of oil from all countries to the US was completely cut off, but it didn't matter, none of the refineries were operating and there were few jobs to commute to. Bush finally released the soldiers from their shelters and they began the cleanup. Bodies were gathered and placed in mass graves. If the victim could be identified, his or her name was added to the growing list. If not, they were identified as John or Jane Doe with a number behind the name. There were quite a few nameless people being buried.

As the American troops returned home, they joined in the cleanup. Most of their families were safe, thanks to Bush's order to shelter the dependants. There was little damage to the infrastructure. Survivors were being rounded up and taken to FEMA camps if they wanted or needed to go. Self sufficient persons and groups were left to their own devices.

The first order of business for the Army Engineers was to restore electrical generation facilities. Some of the nuclear facilities had remained running, but the operators shut many down when they realized they were becoming ill. A single TV channel, CNN, was finally brought back to life and was staffed by military communications people from *The Pentagon Channel*. The TV announcers, obviously military despite their civilian clothes, were brisk and to the point.

The threat level was Red but the defense condition had been lowered to DEFCON 4. Bush had finally declared martial law and imposed a dusk-to-dawn curfew because the survivors were coming out of their shelters. A majority of the prisons had become graveyards. Most were on lockdown and most of the inmates died in their cells. Bush made his first television appearance since the Thanksgiving attack. He appeared to have aged 10 years.

My fellow Americans, there is much to report to you. Since the events of this past Thanksgiving, our country, indeed our way of life has changed dramatically. First, in response to the attacks, I immediately ordered our fleet to sea and recalled all of our soldiers, marines and airmen from their overseas deployments. Our military was kept safe in countries like Germany, Japan, Great Britain and other allied countries. I am pleased to report that all of our military, assisted by our allies, have returned to the United States and are engaged in the cleanup following the events of Thanksgiving. I ordered their dependants sheltered when I ordered our military to take cover.

Second, the CIA identified the primary terrorists as Iraqis and members of al-Qaeda. I directed our Air Force to attack the heart of Iraq using conventional weapons. Naturally, and regrettably, there was some nominal collateral damage (yeah, in the millions). The CIA tracked the Sarin gas used by the terrorists to Syria. I ordered an attack on Damascus, again with conventional weapons. Finally, several of the terrorists were identified as members of Muqtada Sadr's Al Mahdi militia and Sadr was tied to radical Muslim clerics in Iran. I subsequently ordered an attack, again with conventional weapons, on Tehran.

Third, the virus used by the terrorists, though virulent, had a short lifetime. On its own, the virus dies after 30 days. However, extreme precautions are being taken in burying our dead citizens to prevent a resurgence of the virus. Anyone coming in contact with the dead is advised to take appropriate precautions to prevent further spread of the virus.

Fourth, although the death toll from the attacks is hovering around 153 million Americans, our infrastructure is sound. The growing season is fast approaching and no American will go to bed hungry. (They've been telling us that for years!) FEMA and the military are in the process of establishing relocation centers around the country. Any American who needs or wants to relocate to the centers is encouraged to relocate. Self sufficient communities are urged to share their resources with their neighbors.

Finally, although much of the nation's prison population perished in the attacks, certain lawless elements survived and have begun looting and killing. It was with a heavy heart that I imposed martial law and a dusk to dawn curfew. Anyone violating the curfew will be imprisoned under the mandate of the Patriot Act (Where does it say that?). We will recover. We will rebuild. We will have law and order in the process. I thank you. God Bless America! Goodnight."

"What did you think of Dubya's speech Gar-Bear," Ron asked.

"What do I think?" Gary snorted. "I think that it left me with more questions than it answered; that's what I think. It was pure political crap. For instance, who is looting and killing? Where is it happening? How are they going to get the food distributed? And why would George believe anything the CIA tells him? Homeland Security. What a joke. Arresting patriots for violations of the Patriot Act. I mean really!"

"There has been no sign of any unrest here in Holbrook," Ron summarized. "Since those folks returned from Carlsbad, Holbrook is coming back. They're bringing the electrical generators back online as fast as they can."

"What are they going to do when they run out of coal?" Gary asked, "I'd imagine that they must have gotten coal by the train load, probably from Wyoming." (New Mexico)

"I'm sure that the government will see that they get coal," Ron responded.

“The government?” Gary retorted, “Man, you’re starting to sound like a Democrat.”

“Lighten up Gary,” Ron said, “We have everything we need whether or not they get the electricity back up. What we need to concentrate on is making sure everyone here can help defend this place if some of those lawless elements decide to take us on.”

“We have 18 MBR’s and 6 Mini-14’s Ron,” Gary said, “That’s a start.”

“Nichols brought in a collection of large caliber rifles and some .223’s, too,” Ron reminded Gary.

“What we need is military weapons or military style weapons,” Gary insisted.

“We sure as hell can’t get them from the military, and I’m not big on going to Phoenix or Flagstaff, so what’s left?” Ron asked.

“On one of my many trips to Springfield Armory, I clicked on the CA Legal button,” Gary replied. The outfit that has this gun locator service is located in Prescott, Arizona.”

“Yeah, so?” Ron asked.

“I could be wrong, but I think that they have a huge gun warehouse,” Gary said.

“Where is Prescott, and don’t give me the usual crap,” Ron said.

“It’s between Flagstaff and Phoenix and slightly to the west,” Gary said, trying to remember.

“What’s this place called?” Ron asked.

“Davidson’s, I think,” Gary said, “If I remember right, their description went some like - Davidson's Supply Company is one of the largest and most progressive firearms wholesalers in America. Davidson's stocks a vast inventory of firearms, possesses years of industry experience and has a reputation as both a deal maker and an innovation leader.”

“Man, that sounds like the place to go, but how do we get to Prescott?” Ron inquired.

“The quickest way would to take I-40 to the Prescott turnoff,” Gary said, “But I think we can go cross country and avoid large cities all together.”

“Well, the sooner the better,” Ron suggested. “I’ll have a talk with the other guys and we’ll figure out something.”

Early the next morning, a convoy of pickups headed down 377 where they picked up 260 and went on to Payson. They took 260 north and west, picked up 89 and went on

into Prescott. They used a local telephone directory and located Davidson's. The claims the firm made were not wrong. There were guns galore. There had been several apparent attempts to break into the place but no one had succeeded, or, if they had, they hadn't taken a lot.

There were all kinds of guns. Gary told them to concentrate on MBR's and AR's. They came away with some M1A's, some Colt AR-15's and a whole lot of Ruger Mini-14's. There were lots of handguns to choose from and Gary made a point to limit them to 9mm and .45 acp pistols. They loaded nearly 150 firearms onboard the pickups and retraced their cross-country trail, arriving back at the ranch during the afternoon.

Derek, Damon, Jim T., Jim L. and the cousins and Nichols headed to the range to sight the guns in. Johnny opened up the medical clinic to tend to coughs and the like and Ron and Gary headed for a coffee pot.

"We made out all right Gar-Bear," Ron said pouring Gary a cup of decaf.

"I wish we could have come up with more ammo Ron," Gary complained. "And magazines. It's not like I can get on the net and order any from Ammoman."

"Maybe we should inventory what we have and decide what we need," Ron suggested. "I'm sure Nichols (they never used his first name) can steer us in the right direction."

It was nearing dusk when the men returned from the outdoor range. They set the firearms aside and ate dinner. After dinner, everyone assembled in Gary's basement and they began to clean the guns.

"Nichols," Ron asked, "where do we come up with magazines for these guns?"

"Magazines aren't a big problem for most of the guns," Nichols replied, "I have 2 cases of 30 round PMI mags for the Mini-14's. There's almost a full case of LaBelle Teflon coated mags for the Colts, too."

"What about mags for the M1A's?" Ron asked.

"That's a horse of a different color," Nichols answered, "They're pretty expensive and I usually only stocked 40 or fewer at any given time. We're just going to have to count them."

It turned out that he had 36 20-round M-14 magazines. That gave them a total of 136 magazines for 32 M1A rifles, basically 4 magazines per rifle. Most of the military caliber ammo he had was 5.56. They had over 4,000 rounds per 5.56 rifle, but could use more 7.62, 9mm and .45 acp. They had no choice; they needed to go to Mesa or somewhere else for more ammo and magazines. They decided to keep a low profile on that trip; they would take a single vehicle and just get what they could carry. Nichols knew every gunshop in the Greater Phoenix area, so he would be in charge. Derek, Littletree and

his crew and Jim Thomas would make the trip.

They left well before dawn the next morning and took the back way into Mesa. Things started out pretty well, they had the pickup almost full of .308, 9mm and .45 acp ammo and just needed some more magazines. They left Mesa and drove into Phoenix to hit the gun shops on Camelback. The first three gunshops had been stripped bare. At the fourth, they got lucky and came up with a box of 7 round military surplus 1911 magazines and some .45 acp ammo. The fifth shop was their undoing. It hadn't been looted and the shop carried lots of pre-ban, hi-capacity magazines. They grabbed the 4 M1A's still in the rack, 9 AR-15's, several cases and part cases of magazines and were loading more military surplus 7.62 on the pickup when shots rang out.

The shots were coming from the shopping mall on the north side of Camelback across from the gun store. Nichols had taken a round in his right shoulder and lay on the ground bleeding. Derek had been grazed on his left thigh. They ducked for cover and began to return fire in the general area of the mall. A head poked itself above the roof of the Payless Shoe store across the way momentarily. Jim T. saw the head pop up and he laid his M1A across the back of the truck waiting for the head to pop up a second time. A minute or two later, the head came up again and Jim put a 7.62 slug right in the guy's head.

From the random shots that came, Derek decided that there must be 6, well 5 now, guys shooting at them. A couple of them had AK's, he recognized the distinctive sound of their fire from Kosovo. They weren't showing themselves, preferring to shoot from the shadows. The men from the ranch were pretty well pinned down. One of the cousins braved an onslaught of fire and pulled Nichols to safety behind the pickup. The shot was through and through and he applied his combat dressing and Nichols combat dressing to stem the flow of blood. The men from the ranch must have waited the better part of an hour before the bad guys put in an appearance. Slowly, the five men moved out of the shadows and began to cross the parking lot toward the gunshop.

The ranchers waited for the men to get closer. When they were barely 50 yards away, Derek opened up and his fire was followed by fire from the other ranchers. The five ranchers had each picked a different man (what are the odds of that?) and put their man down with a single shot. They rose up, crossed Camelback and finished off the men who had not died from the first shot. Jim Thomas went to the Payless Store and got up on the roof. The sniper had a Remington model 700 7.62 rifle with a bipod. Jim figured that the guy had probably stolen it off a dead SWAT member. He stripped the body and returned to join the others. They had finished stripping the bodies, too and everything was in the back of the nearly overflowing pickup. The men who attacked them were well equipped with magazines for their weapons, 2 AK's, the Remington 700 and 3 Mini-14's.

Derek went back into the gunshop and loaded several cases of the 7.62x39mm Russian ammo. They got Nichols comfortable in the back seat and headed back to the ranch. Derek drove even though his thigh burned something fierce. It was well past dark by the

time they arrived at the ranch. The two cousins carried Nichols down the two flights of stairs to the clinic and Johnny started an IV of Ringer's Lactate.

He added a second bag of IV antibiotics and shot the area of the wound full of Lidocaine. The shot had come from the front and he carefully removed the pieces of cloth embedded in the wound from Nichols shirt. Fortunately Nichols passed out early in the process and Johnny finished cleaning and suturing the two wounds. The shooter must have been using FMJ ammo, the exit hole wasn't much larger than the entrance hole. When he finished with Nichols, Derek came up to him.

"Johnny, I have a graze on my left thigh; how about cleaning it up and putting on a bandage for me," Derek said.

"Who the hell do you think you are? Superman?" Johnny scolded, "Get your pants off and get up on that bed."

The wound was more like a burn than anything else and Johnny cleaned it, bandaged it and gave Derek a shot of antibiotics. He knew that Derek had been to Kosovo, so Derek's shot's should all be current. He wouldn't have to use their limited supply of tetanus vaccine. Derek was fairly quiet through the whole process and slipped his BDU's back on and headed for bed. The remainder of the men unloaded the ammo and weapons and stacked them in Gary's basement. There was plenty of time to clean the weapons tomorrow.

Gary, Ron and Jim T. were sitting at Gary's kitchen table discussing the events of the day. Johnny came into the kitchen, took a cup of coffee and joined them.

"Fred is going to be ok," he said. "It was a clean wound and didn't do that much damage. Give him a couple of weeks and he'll be getting around fairly well. In a couple of months, you won't even know he was wounded. Derek's wound..."

"Derek's wound?" Gary shouted, jumping to his feet, "No one said Derek was wounded!"

"Sit down Gary," Johnny said, "It was just a graze on his thigh, almost like a burn. I put on a bandage, gave him a shot and he went to bed."

"I'd better go check on him right now," Gary insisted.

"And I told you to sit down," Johnny said, "He's fine and he needs some rest. Quit being a worrywart. By the way, I see that your arms are clearing up."

"Yeah," Gary said, "Ronald got me back on the decaf and the itching stopped. And I've started putting on hydrocortisone cream instead of scratching when I get into something that makes me itch."

"We were pretty lucky this trip," Ron said, "From now on, I think that we need to travel

with a bigger group of people. Littletree told me that there is at least another pickup load of ammo at the last store they stopped at. Maybe we should send 3 pickups back to Phoenix tomorrow and grab the ammo before someone else gets it.”

“Where do we stand on magazines?” Gary asked.

“I don’t think anyone has counted yet Gar-Bear,” Ron suggested, “I’ll go do that right now.”

Ron went to the basement and looked at the guns and boxes of magazines. There 2 full cases of M-14 mags plus a part of a case. Each box had two rows of 10 magazines. From the look of the box, there must be 5 layers of magazines, so each case held 100 magazines. He counted the partial box and found it contained 84 mags. That gave them a total of 136 plus 284 or 420 M-14 mags, 10 per rifle for the 40 M1A rifles.

There were 4 cases of SA-80 British magazines for the M-16’s, probably 400 magazines there plus what they already had. He didn’t bother with the pistol magazines; there must have been 7 or 8 different kinds. There were a lot of the Government Issue 7-round M1911 mags. Some boxes marked PMI caught his eye. They contained 30-round after market magazines for the Mini-14’s. Not bad, not bad at all.

Ron returned to the kitchen. “Hey Gar,” he said, we have over 400 M-14 mags, and a ton of mags for the AR-15’s and Mini-14’s. All we need is more ammo. Of course, we won’t pass up on any more mags, you can never have too many.”

They decided to make the trip back to Phoenix for the next day. This time, Johnny would come along in case they had more trouble and needed a medic. Gary and Ron were going to go too and no one could talk them out of it. They all headed to bed because zero dark thirty came early.

Only in America – Chapter 9 – The Cousins

The three pickups pulled out of the ranch at 5:30am heading for Phoenix. Fred Nichols was awake and doing ok and his wife was fussing all over him. Mary was an Army vet and she joined the men. Jim Thomas and his men were in one truck, Damon, Derek and Mary in the second and Ron, Gary, Littletree and his three cousins in the third. As they drove to Phoenix, Jim and his cousins were visiting. Gary was about half listening to them and half keeping an eye out for trouble. Jim said something about his tribe, the Navaho. One of the cousins compared how his tribe, the Zuni, did it differently. Johnny said that his tribe, the Chiricahua did it an entirely different way and the last cousin said the Mescalero did it the same way as the Chiricahua.

Gary's head almost snapped out of its socket.

"What do you mean Navaho, Zuni, Chiricahua and Mescalero?" he asked. "I thought you guys were all related."

"We are," Jim started to laugh. All of the men, including Ron were laughing. The tears were almost pouring from Jim's eyes. "Gary, we're cousins," Jim managed to get out. "You are the dumbest White man I've ever met."

"I don't see..." Gary started to say.

"Gar-Bear, cousin is the same as bro," Ron explained.

"Oh," Gary said.

Ron and the cousins visited all of the way to Phoenix. Gary stared out the window. From now on, the first question out of his mouth was going to be, "Which tribe?"

They arrived at the scene of the prior day's carnage. The bodies were still lying where they'd left them, so apparently no military had been by. They emptied out the gun store, lock stock and barrel, as the expression goes. They had all the ammo they could use in the foreseeable future. Ron was snooping around in the back room and found a staircase leading to the second floor. He went up the stairs and his eyes got wide.

"Gary, get you lazy butt up here," Ron called.

Gary yanked out his Vaquero thinking Ron was in trouble. He tried to take the stairs two at a time, but that only lasted for 3 steps. When he finally got to the top of the stairs, Ron was standing there holding an AR-15.

"You called me up here over an AR-15?" Gary said.

"Look closer partner," Ron retorted, "This here's a genuine M-16A2. Look around, this guy must have been a Class III dealer."

Gary knew the guy wasn't a Class III dealer; he'd looked all of them up in the Yellow Pages. Ron corrected Gary, saying the guy was a Class III dealer and apparently a police department supplier. But, sure enough, there were a lot of M-16's and a few converted AR-15's if he was any judge. There were also suppressors and the Remington 870's with the 14" barrels. Gary's jaw hit the floor when he saw the two Remington 870's with 12" barrels and pistol grips.

They were Remington SBS's, produced only for police use. He called to the guys downstairs and had them clean out the large room. From now on, he intended to carry the 12" shotgun along with his M1A and M1911 when it looked like he was getting into a combat situation. They loaded the weapons, ammo and equipment from the second floor onto the pickups. They were, in their minds, set for WW III. The long drive home was made more pleasant when Jim called Gary cousin.

When they got back to the ranch that afternoon, Gary grabbed both of the cruiser-style shotguns and disappeared. He showed up at dinnertime and after dinner presented Ron with a canvas scabbard he'd fashioned on Sharon's sewing machine. It wasn't elaborate, but it fit the short-balled shotgun perfectly. It could be attached to an Alice pack frame. He had sewn half of a shotgun shell belt onto the scabbard and filled it with 2³/₄", 12-pellet 00 buckshot. Just a little something, he said, to keep the Boogiemans at bay.

It started to warm up outside and it was soon warm enough to transplant the tomato & pepper plants they had started in the houses. They eyed the potatoes and planted an acre of them. More space was devoted to corn and green beans and carrots and radishes and lettuce and on and on. They ran out of seed before they had the entire 20 acres planted. Maria produced small jars of pepper seeds and they planted several varieties of hot peppers. It seemed as if the weeds grew faster than the vegetables and several people were kept busy weeding the garden.

During the first week of June, two beat up pickups showed up at the front gate. Gary and Ron were taking a tour sitting at the front gate and they approached the pickups, which contained mostly men; there were two men and one woman in each pickup. The people looked like Indians to Gary, so the first question out of his mouth was, "Which tribe?" The answer came back just as quickly, "Lakota." Ron told the men to wait there and he went looking for Jim. He told Jim they had two pickups of Lakota at the front gate. Jim's reaction was hard to read, even for the people expert, Ronald. Ron could barely keep up with Jim as he rushed to the front gate.

"Hey cousin," the driver of the first vehicle said to Jim.

Jim walked up to the man and engaged in a hushed but apparently heated conversation. The argument remained hushed and eventually the driver of the front truck signaled the driver of the second truck to back out the driveway. Once they hit the road, the two pickups took off in a hurry.

“Jim, what was that all about?” Gary asked. “I thought all you Indians were cousins.”

“I don’t claim those people,” Jim said. Seeing the puzzled look on Gary’s face, he explained. “That bunch was some of the AIM people from Pine Ridge. You remember Russell Means from back in the 1970’s don’t you?”

“I actually met him and Dennis Banks during the summer of 1973 in Chicago,” Gary said.

“They were probably on the run,” Jim said.

“They were,” Gary confirmed. “They showed up at a meeting at the Hyatt Regency O’Hare that we were having. All hush-hush and cloak and dagger, if you know what I mean.”

“Means and Banks are considered respectable now,” Jim explained, “But I don’t want any part of that AIM bunch. They would end up trying to take over and then want to evict you from The Res.”

“I’m glad you know what’s going on Jim,” Gary said, “I thought that AIM was long gone.”

“Not hardly,” Jim said and walked back to what he had been doing.

“Well I’ll be danged,” Gary said.

“Probably,” Ron laughed, “So you met Means and Banks in Chicago, huh? You never told me about that.”

“Yes I did, I think,” Gary replied.

“If you say so partner, who am I to dispute you?” Ron shook his head.

“How are we doing on food?” Ron asked after a few minutes.

“Pretty good,” Gary said, “We got a lot of stuff from Safeway and I don’t know that we’re particularly low on anything. Well, that’s not true, come to think of it, but with the garden, we should be able to get by ok. We need to find some milk cows, though, if we can. The margarine is starting to get well past the expiration dates and we don’t have all that much butter frozen.”

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Six thousand miles to the east, in Riyadh, a formerly disgraced son of a wealthy family was being welcomed home. His years of hiding in Afghanistan were over; the tall man was granted an audience by King and Prime Minister FAHD bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud.

Osama bowed deeply before his uncle.

“The years have not been kind to you,” FAHD said.

“Alas, uncle,” Osama replied, “I grow weary of hiding from the Americans.”

“Yes, the Americans,” FAHD acknowledged, “It’s a pity that you didn’t kill more of them in 2001.”

“We thought to kill tens of thousands in the World Trade Center uncle,” Osama explained, “But the planes did not arrive at the same time. The plane destined for Washington, well you know what happened to it.”

“Still, over 2,800 people makes quite a statement nephew,” FAHD acknowledged. “These Americans have overthrown that butcher Saddam; but then they turn around and kill millions of our brothers.”

“It is the will of Allah,” Osama replied.

“It is the will of George Bush,” FAHD corrected him. “How would you like a second chance at that son of Satan?”

“How could we do this?” Osama asked, “Surely he is heavily guarded since the Iranians and my people killed so many of their people.”

“That was brilliant nephew,” FAHD complimented, “How did you manage to get the Sarin and the virus into America?”

“Their borders were so porous uncle,” Osama explained, “We moved the virus in from Mexico and the Sarin in from Canada.”

“Nephew, we have maintained an open relationship with the Americans,” FAHD began to explain his plan, “I propose to send my half brother Crown Prince and First Deputy Prime Minister ABDALLAH bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud to negotiate the resumption of our oil deliveries to America. Do you not have a young disciple who is totally unknown to the Americans? He could accompany ABDALLAH and kill Bush.”

“Would that not make ABDALLAH’s life forfeit?” Osama asked.

“He would have my throne if he had half a chance,” FAHD retorted. “We will kill two birds with a single stone.”

“I have such a man uncle,” Osama continued.

“Good, here is what we will do...” FAHD outlined the plan to his nephew.

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“When do you want to go cattle rustling?” Ron asked.

“We’ll be off in 20 minutes,” Gary replied, “How about then?”

Earlier, when they had gotten the beef cattle, the men had used a horse trailer. It wasn’t the best thing to transport cattle in, but they had gotten by and it was close enough to the ground that it had been easy to herd the cattle into the trailer. They checked with both Jims and some of the other men and got directions to four different ranches in the area that had, the last anyone knew, one or more dairy cattle.

They marked the locations on a map and set out with Ron driving and Gary riding shotgun. Since they weren’t wearing packs, Gary opted to use the sling that the SBS-AOW came with. It slung the weapon under his arm. He was wearing his Vaquero and carrying his Winchester .357 rifle, as was Ron. They almost looked like cowboys, all they needed was some horse crap on their boots.

There were no living livestock at the first ranch. They found one cow and a calf at the second ranch and loaded them on the trailer. They found a second cow at the third ranch and added her to their growing herd. At the fourth ranch, there were two cows. The trailer was only designed for 4 horses, but they managed to squeeze the last two cows into the trailer. They hadn’t found a bull and only the first cow with the calf was producing milk. They returned to the ranch, unloaded the cows and calf and went to two ranches Jim was sure had bulls.

The first ranch had a bull; a very dead and severely decomposed bull, but it had a bull. Perhaps they would have better luck at the second ranch. They arrived at the second ranch but didn’t see any livestock at first. They were just about to leave when they spotted several animals in a field about ½ mile from the ranch buildings. Ron drove over to the gate and Gary got out and held it open while Ron drove the truck and trailer through. As they pulled closer to the animals they could see 3 cows with calves and a bull. Without horses to herd the cattle, this could be tricky.

The cattle shied away from the pickup and they eventually herded them to a corner where 4 fences came together. Ron swung the pickup around leaving the tailgate of the trailer pointed toward the cattle. The two men got out of the pickup and dropped the tailgate of the trailer. The bull was standing between them and the cows, his head lowered, pawing the ground with his right foot. Gary had seen that behavior in a bull growing up in Iowa. Ron had seen it on TV. They slammed the tailgate shut and managed to get back into the pickup and slammed the doors just as the bull came charging by.

“I think we’d better go get some help,” Ron suggested.

“Lots of help,” Gary echoed the sentiment.

When they got back to the gate by the building those same two pickups that they'd seen the Lakota driving earlier were parked across the road on the other side of the gate. The 2 women had remained in the pickups, but the 4 men were standing beside the trucks. One of the men held a Winchester carbine and another a revolver. The other two men held baseball bats.

"You take the guy on the right and I'll take the guy on the left," Ron instructed. Gary released the safety on the shotgun. Ron parked the pickup, shut off the engine and they got out. The man with the revolver, the driver of the lead vehicle from earlier in the day stood besides the driver's door of his pickup. The man with the rifle stood by the passenger side of the other pickup.

"Help you fellas?" Ron asked.

"We don't take kindly to rustlers in these parts," the man with the revolver said.

"What would you know about it?" Gary challenged, "You're from South Dakota."

The man with the revolver began to swing the revolver up. Gary had practiced with the slung shotgun. In one smooth motion, he brought the shotgun up and pulled the trigger. Twelve pellets of 00 buckshot cut into the man shoving him back like he'd been hit by a car. Gary pumped the action and swung to meet the threat posed by the other male passenger from the first pickup. He was still jacking the action shut when he heard bang-bang-bang, 3 reports from Ron's .45 auto. The man with the rifle was thrown backward as the three 230 grain FMJ bullets struck the man. Gary paused his swing with the ugly little shotgun pointing straight at the man from the first pickup. Ron quickly swung the M1911 toward the driver of the second pickup.

"You're the SOBs that murdered Custer," Ron spat.

The driver of the second pickup dropped his baseball bat and jumped into the still running pickup. He backed the pickup up 60 or 70 feet and threw the pickup into a sliding turn just like you see on TV. He had obviously shifted from reverse into 1st gear during the turn because the pickup never missed a beat and took off throwing gravel almost all of the way back to the gate. The other man dropped his baseball bat and froze.

"What the hell are you waiting for Sitting Bull?" Gary shouted, "An engraved fricking invitation?"

The second man blanched, ran around the front of the truck and jumped in the driver's side. With the other pickup gone, he didn't need to back up; he spun the tires trying to catch up with his fleeing friend. Gary walked up and picked up the revolver. It was a Colt SAA in .45 Colt with a 5½" barrel. It must have been part of a set; the rifle was also a .45 Colt. They threw the baseball bats in the back of the pickup and the guns on the back seat. Gary held the gate open while Ron drove through, and then closed it. They drove back to the ranch. They told their story over a glass of iced tea. They asked if an-

yone had any idea how to get the bull and cows back to the ranch.

“It’s not like there is any shortage of 2½-ton trucks,” Littletree said, “And every ranch with cattle has a loading ramp. I’ll get the cousins,” he paused and winked at Gary, “To build us a ramp and we’ll take one truck and 3 pickups to herd the cattle.”

They returned to the ranch, found the loading ramp and within an hour had the bull, 3 cows and their calves aboard the truck. The cousins had the ramp finished by the time they got back to the ranch. They pulled through the gate and backed the truck up to the ramp. The cattle came off a lot easier than they went on. The bull was none too happy over his trip and promptly charged the men. That was the fastest anyone could ever remember seeing Gary move. Sharon was standing by the front door holding pitcher of iced tea. The men all took a glass and she poured. She fished in her apron pocket for Ron’s sweet and Low.

“I just have one question,” Gary said. “Does anyone know how to milk a cow?” (Gary did, but he wasn’t volunteering)

Jim Thomas and his crew used sacked, premixed concrete and poured a 15’x30’ slab. They used the last of the lumber to build a barn with 8 milking stalls and stanchions. One of Thomas’ men had been raised on a farm and had, on occasion, hand milked a cow. He immediately got the duty.

They began to have fresh milk for the first time in a long time. When all of the cows were producing milk, they could begin to make cheese if they could figure out how. And, they could make butter if they just had a churn. Gary started asking around. There were a couple of antique stores over in Winslow, he was told, why didn’t Ron and he drive over and check them out?

Winslow wasn’t that far away so Ron and Gary didn’t leave until after a civilized breakfast. After their experience with the Lakota when they tried to get the bull, both men carried their SBS/AOW’s in what Ron called the Sonny Crockett rig. They also had their M1A and FAL rifles and looked every bit the part of wannabe TV heroes. The first antique store had a wooden churn with a vertical plunger and a hand-cranked butter churn with a glass jar from the 1930’s.

They really hit the jackpot at the second store. They found an electric churn similar to the hand-cranked model from the first store. While Ron took their find to the pickup, Gary nosed around in the back room. When he found 3 new electric butter churns still in their boxes from the Alabama manufacturer, he was suddenly very happy that the antiques collecting bug had never bitten him.

There was also an electric powered cream separator that looked a lot like the one his father had used back in the late 1940’s. The Creamery in Greene had gone through a phase where it paid a farmer to separate out the cream and either feed the skim milk to his family or hogs. Gary had hated milk ever since. Ron was looking through the shelf of

books in the antique store and found 2 on cheese making.

They were just about to get back in the pickup when they heard, "Stand right where you are!" They froze. "Now, raise your hands and turn around slowly." They complied, certain that they were about to meet their maker.

A man, apparently in his 40's, was pointing a pump shotgun right at them. To his left, standing 4-5 paces further back was a teen-aged boy, also holding a shotgun.

"What are you men doing?" he asked.

"Just shopping for antiques," Gary replied.

"Looting is more like it," the man insisted.

"Yeah, ok, looting," Ron said.

"What did you steal?" the man asked.

"Some butter churns," Ron said, "And two books on cheese making."

"You mean you have milk?" the man said incredulously.

"Yes and cows and food and electricity," Gary half smarted off.

"Where are you from?" the man asked, lowering the barrel of the shotgun slightly.

"Holbrook," Ron replied.

"I didn't know there was anyone alive in Holbrook," the man said.

"There's almost 400 people between the people in town and those on our ranch," Gary said. "Maybe a lot more."

"I'm going to lower my gun fellas," the man said, "Kenny, lower yours, too, but keep an eye on them."

"My name is Jacob Brown," the man said extending his hand, "Call me Jake."

"Jake, can we lower our hands?" Ron asked.

"Oh, yeah, sorry," Jake replied. "You're the first people we've seen. Well, there were two pickups of Indians here a while back."

"South Dakota license plates?" Ron asked.

“Well yeah,” Jake said, “Did you have a run in with them, too?”

“More like we killed two of them,” Ron laughed, “Does that qualify as a run in?”

“I expect so,” Jake grinned. “Kenny put your gun down. I think maybe these guys are okay.”

Kenny lowered the barrel on his shotgun slightly; he thought maybe his father was just a little too trusting. After all, the guys admitted they were looters.

“I’m Ron Green and this ugly old fart is Gary Olsen,” Ron said taking Jake’s hand. “We live on a small ranch about 20 miles outside of Holbrook.”

“I thought that I knew most of the people over in Holbrook,” Jake said, “But I don’t ever remember seeing either of you.”

“We transplants from California,” Gary explained. “I bought a section of ground and we put in some houses.”

“And invited Littletree and his cousins to live there, too,” Jake grinned. “Did you really put a sign that says ‘The Res’?”

“You’ve heard of us?” Gary asked.

“Hell fellas,” Jake laughed, “Everyone in 100 miles has probably heard about the Survivalists from California. Also heard you have quite an arsenal.”

“Where did you hear that?” Gary asked, suspicious.

“Fred Nichols,” Jake said, “I was in there one day when a large shipment of guns came in from a Mesa gun store.”

“Guilty as charged,” Gary laughed. “So, Jake, what’s your situation?”

“The wife and me and the kids, Kenny here and Mary, lived in a mobile home,” Jake began. “When TSHTF, we got into the basement of City Hall. Most of the people around here bugged out. Those that didn’t died. It was pretty tough at first; we didn’t have time to grab much food. We were living off the vending machines for a while. Anyway, to make a long story short, we found a radio in one of the offices and stayed in the basement, mostly, until Public Radio came back on the air. We were nearly starving and hoped it was safe, so we went back to our mobile home.”

“Ever think about living on a ranch Jake?” Gary asked.

“Are you inviting us to your ranch?” Jake asked.

“Yeah. We have 8 empty mobile home slabs,” Gary said, “So why not? You’d be a whole lot safer in Holbrook or on my ranch. Get your family together and follow us back to Holbrook. We’ll all come back here tomorrow and tow that home of yours to the ranch.”

“Come on fellas, let me introduce you to my family,” Jake said. “Kenny, I told you to put the gun down.”

Ron and Gary got in the pickup and followed Jake and Kenny in their pickup to a mobile home park. Jake introduced them to his wife Mary, daughter Mary and offered them coffee. Jake told the women to gather up enough clothes for an overnight visit, they were moving to Holbrook. Ron and Gary looked around the trailer. Apparently Jake had been to the market shopping, too.

They left after a short time, Jake and Kenny in the pickup and the two Mary’s in their equally ancient car. When they got back to the ranch, it was like old home week. Jake knew all of the folks from the Holbrook area. Ron and Gary introduced Jake and his family to their families. They put them up in the shelter for the night because there weren’t any empty bedrooms.

Jake was completely shocked at the shelters, he hadn’t heard about them over in Winslow. Gary gave him a tour, pointing out how they had divided the shelters into living quarters and storage and mechanical facilities. When he showed Jake the storeroom, Jake pointed out that the grocery store in Winslow was still pretty full since only he and his family had been using it. Gary asked Jake about the new mobile home sitting at the front of the trailer park in Winslow. It, he had observed was still hooked up to the semi they used to tow it. Wouldn’t Jake rather have a new trailer?

Just after 7am, every male over the age of 14 left for Winslow. They took all of their 2½-ton trucks; it was scavenging time. While most of the men stripped the local stores of anything usable, Jake and Kenny helped themselves to some new furniture from the furniture store and outfitted the new mobile home sitting at the front of the trailer park. They spent almost 4 hours sorting through their possessions in their old home, deciding what they should keep and what they should discard. In the end, they moved little, mostly the clothing, kitchen stuff and the food. They raided a clothing store and added all kinds of new clothing to the new mobile home. By late afternoon, they had the semi running and began to tow the new home to Holbrook.

When they arrived at the ranch, Jake pulled the new trailer onto the slab next to Johnny’s. It wasn’t until he stepped down from the cab of the semi that he finally realized what had been bothering him all the way from Winslow. He had forgotten leveling stands for the mobile home.

His wife and daughter came to inspect the new home and were fairly pleased with what Kenny and he had selected from the furniture store. Mary asked him where the boxes were that had been on the shelf in the bedroom closet; the boxes that contained photos

and family memorabilia. Half convinced that he was going to have to go back to Winslow for stands, Jake suggested that they all go back the next day and get whatever Kenny and he had overlooked.

The men moved the fragile groceries to the shelter storeroom. These were things like flour, sugar and food packed in boxes. They still had 8 trucks to unload and the storeroom was full. They set pallets, left over from their scavenging in Holbrook, on the slabs next to Jake's new trailer and unloaded the boxes of canned goods and such onto the pallets. They threw a tarp over the goods in case it rained.

"Ron, we're going to have to get some lumber in Winslow and build a building to hold the food," Littletree said.

Jim Thomas, who was also standing there, asked, "How big of a slab are you going to need Jim?"

"I think we'd better build a big building, Jim, say about 100' by 200'," Littletree responded.

"There's no way we can put in a slab that big using premixed concrete," Thomas observed. "I'll get someone started grading tomorrow and we'll use the ready mix trucks from Holbrook to haul in the concrete. Where do you fellas want this building?"

Ron got Gary and the four of them decided where to put the new building. Littletree said it would take them a couple of days to haul the lumber from Holbrook and Winslow and Thomas told him to take his time, the slab wouldn't be in for several days. Jake explained his problem to Ron and Gary. He had to go back to Winslow for stands and to get the stuff he'd missed moving from their old trailer.

They decided that Thomas' man would do the grading and that most of them would go back to Winslow the next day to try and finish emptying out the town. They planned to take all of the teenagers too and have them scour homes for mason jars.

Mary, Brenda, Jennifer, Amy and Lorrie stayed at the ranch to provide some security. Most of the rest of the residents headed to Winslow the next day. It didn't take all that long to get what they wanted from the stores and by early afternoon, everyone was going house-to-house looking for canning supplies. They found what amounted to several cases of jars once they were collected into a single pile.

Littletree had loaded six trucks with lumber, hauled it to Holbrook, returned and had loaded the six trucks a second time. There was a lot of aluminum home siding at the lumberyard and they would come back the next day and get it and the insulation. There was a diesel tanker sitting at a service station along I-40 and an AmeriGas delivery truck parked in the AmeriGas lot. Ron filled the LP tanker and the group returned to Holbrook with 8,000 gallons of diesel, 3,000 gallons of LP and the results of their day

long salvage operation.

Only in America – Chapter 10 – Growing Pains

The following day, they took all 12 trucks to Winslow and got the siding, insulation and other building materials. Thomas's man had the area graded for the slab and 4 of his men began to put in the forms. They had 300' of forms in by the end of the day. With all of them working on it, they finished the forms early the next afternoon and were ready to pour. The lumber was piled pretty close to the site of the new building and once the concrete cured; they could have the building up in a matter of weeks.

"We have a problem Gary Berry," Ron said.

"What now Ronald McDonald?" Gary jibed Ron back.

"What are we going to do if the lights go out?" Ron asked, "Those two little 30kw generators sure won't handle the electricity for the ranch anymore."

"Hell, I don't know," Gary replied, "Do you have any suggestions?"

"Several, but I don't know how practical they are," Ron said, "We could put in wind turbines or solar panels or we could just find a couple of large generators."

"Well, I'd say that wind turbines and solar electric are out," Gary responded, "Neither of us knows anything about those. On the other hand, we could see about getting a couple of big generators."

"Where would we find generators like that?" Ron asked.

"How about the dealer where we got the other generators," Gary suggested.

"Phoenix again?" Ron groaned. "What do you have, a death wish?"

"Not hardly; you asked. I answered," Gary said, "Don't ask the question if you don't want to hear the answer."

"Well, we'll have to wait until they get the slab in," Ron said, "There's no way I'm going to Phoenix without a small army."

The slab took 2 days to pour. On the third day, they headed to Phoenix with two 2½-ton trucks and 3 pickups. Everyone was well armed. The trip took about 4 hours. When they got to the dealers, they found 2-725kw Cummins DVCC industrial diesel units. At full load, the units generated about 2,000 amps continuous (600kw), 2,600 amps (750kw) standby and used 46 gallons of diesel per hour. At 50 gallons per hour full load they wouldn't be able to fuel one generator much less two. They also took the available smaller diesel generators, filters, etc.

When they got back to the ranch, they left the stuff from Phoenix on the trucks. Thomas

had to pour another slab for the generators next to the slab for the building. They were going to let the concrete cure for 15 days and then start on the huge project.

◦

Per FAHD's instructions, Osama had selected a young Saudi man to kill Bush and another young man as a decoy. The former would give every appearance of being above reproach, regardless of how far they dug into his background. The latter, if one truly dug deeply enough, would be found to have indirect ties, through an uncle, to Osama's family. FAHD had contacted Bush and a meeting was scheduled for the first week of September in Washington, DC.

The assassin would be FAUD's personal liaison to ABDALLAH and the decoy the assistant to ABDALLAH's personal advisor. The upside to the plan was that were suspicion to arise, it would be away from ABDALLAH and the liaison. The downside was that the Americans were so incompetent when it came to these matters that they would probably identify the wrong man and think the liaison was the assassin. That would tie the assassin right back to FAHD. Rather than have that happen, the decoy was instructed to behave in such a way as to leave hints around that the Americans would pick up and focus on him. Only 3 people knew the true agenda, FAHD, Osama and the assassin. Everyone else was expendable.

◦

With the concrete cured, Littletree and his men began on the building. They started on the side nearest the generator slab. Thomas and his men set the generators on the slab and then positioned the lumber around the building before they pitched in and helped Littletree and the cousins. Rather than having Thomas pour concrete columns to support the roof joists, Littletree had opted for using the adjustable steel posts frequently found in home construction.

He had also opted for a flat roof because a pitched roof over that large of a building wasn't practical. They were building the building with 10' walls, any higher would have required different steel posts. As it was, they almost didn't have enough lumber for the building; they wouldn't have enough lumber left when they were done to build an out-house.

The building came together slowly. Ron and Gary had set up a table with an umbrella and two chairs so they could supervise. With the building completely framed, the men laid the tarpaper and began to mop the tar on the roof. Ron and Gary gave up their supervision duties until the roof was done. That hot tar really stunk.

With the roof done, the carpenters began to install the insulation in the walls of the huge building. After the initial start, only one man put up the insulation and he stayed well ahead of the men putting on the aluminum siding. Even with 8 men applying siding, it took a long time to finish the building. It was near the end of August when Littletree pro-

nounced the shell done. They still had to wire the building and wire in the generators, but they took time out to move all of the food to the building before they took on that task.

Arizona Public Service ran new wires from the road to the transfer switches that were mounted inside the building adjacent to the generators. When they discovered that there was no one at the ranch to hook the generators to the transfer switches, two of the men offered to come out after work and finish the installation for a reasonable fee. They even brought some equipment from the generation plant and hooked the system up so the second generator would kick in if the first failed or the demand on the system exceeded 2,000 amps.

When the two men observed the carpenters and concrete men struggling to put in the wiring in the building, they offered to do the installation for them. They picked up some desperately needed cash and the building was wired right. One corner of the building, near the transfer switches, was devoted to a small office and a Spartan bathroom containing only a sink and stool.

Truthfully, the warehouse was nearly empty. What had appeared to be a huge pile of supplies when they were stacked on the mobile home slabs, occupied less than ¼ of the warehouse. Observing the vast empty space, Ron and Gary decided that they should get the guys together and have a brainstorming session. What could they do to fill the warehouse? Where would they get diesel fuel to run the two 750kw generators? They had a lot of questions, but not many answers.

Linda and Sharon suggested that they have a picnic the next day, Saturday, August 27, 2005.

“Has it only been 9 months since TSHTF?” Gary asked Ron, “It seems like 9 years.”

“Yep, only 9 months Gar,” Ron said, “And look at all that we’ve accomplished.”

“We still have problems Ron,” Gary pointed out, “Those generators will use over 1,100 gallons of diesel a day, each, and we only have about 7,000 gallons of diesel in our tank plus the 8,000 gallons on the trailer. That isn’t much of a supply.”

“True, but they won’t be running at full capacity,” Ron said. “I suppose we’d better bring this up at the picnic tomorrow.”

The next day, more time was spent discussing their problems and possible solutions than was spent partying. The answer, when it came, was startling in its simplicity.

“Even though everything went to hell on Thanksgiving Day last year,” Littletree said, “There must have been some truckers on the road. I suggest we take I-40 to the west and hit every exit all the way to Flagstaff. I’ll bet we can find a lot of tractor-trailer rigs parked at truck stops and at the driver’s homes.”

"If it had been any other day of the year," Thomas said, "There would have been thousands of trucks on the road. But, I think Jim is right, we should still find a lot of rigs."

"There's a wrecker with a generator on it there at the Winslow service station on I-40," Jake offered, "Maybe we should take it along in case we need to give any batteries a boost. Besides, most of the stations have diesel fuel and even if the trailers we find are empty, we can pump out the tanks at the stations. Some of the bigger truck stops have several hundred thousand gallons of diesel in their tanks."

"But it's been sitting there for at least 9 months," Gary observed, "Is it still good?"

"We can always add a little octane booster if it isn't," one of the men suggested, "I don't know if that will help or not, but it's worth a try."

"We could try to find all of the PRI-D we can find and add that to the tanks, too," someone else suggested.

"The problem," Ron interrupted, "Is that diesel fuel begins to go bad as fast as 28 days in the tank. Now, if we can find full tanks with little or no oxygen, we'll be better off. There are some products out there that are added to old diesel fuel, but I don't know if we can find any. We'll just have to do the best that we can."

"Go for the full tankers first. I've read some tests that were done using the PRI-G and PRI-D products. In one of the tests, diesel fuel that was 15 times worse than spec was restored to near refinery condition. The problem is that I don't know how much of that is true and how much of it is advertising phooey."

"Well, we have to have diesel fuel, so I guess we'll just get some PRI-D and trust to luck," Gary said. "Did anyone put PRI-D in our 8,000 gallon tanker?"

"I added PRI-D to our tank and the tanker," Ron said, "Why don't we hook up the tanker to the generators and see if they'll run?"

The next morning the men did just that. They ran a fuel line from the tanker, through an adapter and connected it to the first generator. The generators' batteries were fully charged and Littletree tripped the main cutoff switch in the building. The generator cranked right up.

So far, so good, the PRI-D seemed to do the job ok. It had been in the tanker for 4 weeks, and Ron had added 4 gallons to the 8,000-gallon tank. Their mission was two-fold, find full tankers and find PRI-D. The trucks all seemed to operate just fine on the fuel out of the 15,000-gallon underground tank. They filled up the pickup and 8 men headed west from Holbrook on I-40. They stopped in Winslow and got the wrecker running. One of the men hotwired a gas pump to the generator and they filled the truck's gas tank. It ran a little rough, but they could live with it.

They came up with 6 rigs the first day, stopping when they ran out of people to drive them back to the ranch. All of the rigs were double bottomed so they had 96,000-gallons of old diesel fuel. They next day, they set out again. Six more double bottomed rigs and a bobtail load of PRI-D, gave them a total of 192,000 gallons of stabilized fuel. The third day only produced 4 more rigs and a pickup load of PRI-D. They had 256,000-gallons and counting. That evening brought an end to their hunt for a while. They could barely believe the evening news.

The breaking news today is the assassination attempt on President Bush and the assassination of Vice-President Cheney, the announcer repeated. At 10am Eastern, President Bush met with First Deputy Prime Minister ABDALLAH bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud to negotiate the resumption of Saudi oil deliveries to the United States. The meeting initially proceeded as scheduled. Sources close to the White House have reported that about ½ hour into the meeting the CIA tipped the Secret Service to a possible assassination plot.

The assistant to the first advisor to the First Deputy Prime Minister, reportedly had ties to bin Laden. He was immediately taken into custody by the Secret Service and everyone except the First Deputy Prime Minister, President Bush and the Secret Service were removed from the White House. The First Deputy Prime Minister's liaison with King FAHD, together with other members of the delegation, was being escorted from the White House just as Vice President Cheney was arriving for an unrelated meeting.

Sources tell us that the liaison leaped at the Vice President with a sharpened hard plastic ruler, burying the ruler in the Vice President's throat before the Secret Service agents accompanying the Vice President could react. Vice President Richard Cheney died at 10:41am Eastern this morning as a result of his injuries, the announcer concluded.

“Son-of-a-...” Ron said turning off the news, “Who the hell’s going to run the country now?”

“Why Dubya, of course,” Gary laughed, “And whoever Daddy tells George to appoint as his new Vice President.”

The President wasn't just angry; he couldn't even talk for over an hour after he'd learned of Cheney's death. First Deputy Prime Minister ABDALLAH bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud was under arrest as were all the members of the Saudi delegation.

Two B-2 Spirit bombers had left Whitman AFB at 10:45am CST. Each carried 16 B-83, 1.2-megaton nuclear weapons. Bush had, in fact, made two phone calls. The first sent the bombers on their way. The second was to the Premier of Russia. Bush told Putin that the Saudis had assassinated Cheney and he had ordered a proportional response to the murder.

What was the response the President had in mind, Putin wanted to know. Nothing much, just a couple of B-2's the President had replied. By the way, Mr. Premier, we're at DEFCON 1 for the foreseeable future.

Putin gathered his advisors. They told him that the US had the jump on them and they had no choice but to sit this one out. They watched their satellites and witnessed 32 nuclear explosions in what used to be called Saudi Arabia. Bush was sitting in the Situation Room of the White House monitoring the progress of the bombers. When the bombers had completed their runs and Saudi Arabia was but a smoldering memory, he insisted on going to the room where the Saudi delegation was being detained.

"Let that bunch of raghead SOB's go," Bush announced within earshot of the First Deputy Prime Minister. "There ain't no more Saudi Arabia."

The First Deputy Prime Minister rose as if to protest. Bush just pointed his finger at the man, his thumb sticking up in the air, mimicking a cocked gun. ABDALLAH bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud bowed his head and kept his mouth shut. Maybe Libya could give him a new home.

The urgency of their task was heightened by the assassination of Vice-President Cheney. Mary was an over-the-road truck driver and she was pressed into service, as was the recovered Fred Nichols.

They had better luck to the east than they had to the west. For 3 straight days, they returned with 8 16,000-gallon double bottom tankers. On the fourth day they found 5 more. They ended up with a grand total of 735,000 gallons of stabilized diesel fuel, enough to run a single generator for 665 days less whatever they would use up for their vehicles.

The real bonus of their fuel scavenging effort was the loaded semis they found along the Interstate. They hadn't stopped to inventory any of the rig's contents; there was no time for that. Seeing the tankers exiting I-40 led some of the resident of Holbrook to approach the ranch about moving there. Gary, Ron and the two Jim's had a pow-wow (pun intended) and Ron and Gary left the initial screening up to the two Jim's and Fred Nichols. They would consider anyone who passed the men's scrutiny as possible residents.

One enterprising fellow showed up driving a Safeway truck full of groceries. They helped him and his wife move an abandoned 14'x70' trailer to the ranch. Besides, all 3 men had vouched for the guy. By the first anniversary of the attack, all 12 pads sported mobile homes and the warehouse was full. They had a lot to be thankful for. There had even been a discussion about putting in 12 more trailer pads come spring.

It was an official Thanksgiving; there were turkeys in the freezers. There were also more freezers. One of the trucks contained nothing but freezers and refrigerators. The coal fired electrical generation plant had threatened to go offline, but a benevolent government sent a two-mile long train of coal down from Wyoming.

It sounds like a lot, but the electric generation burned something on the order of several 2-mile long trainloads of coal during a year. Some of the younger people like Gary and Ron's kids wanted to leave the ranch. They couldn't comprehend the enormity of the disaster. For that matter, here on the first anniversary of the attacks, neither could any of the older people.

Derek had called Gary on September 11, 2001 and asked him if he had the TV on. He had turned it on quickly and saw the planes crash into the World Trade Center over and over again. Then the towers fell. Before the week was over, he had learned a new name, Osama bin Laden. Most Americans still thought bin Laden was in hiding. The government controlled NPR and the only TV channel. The story of the end of Saudi Arabia somehow didn't quite make it to the listeners or viewers.

The new Vice President was James Addison Baker III, former White house Chief-of-Staff and former Secretary of State. With the Republican Party controlling both houses of Congress, Baker had been a shoo-in. Gary could take or leave Cheney, but he liked Baker. At least Daddy hadn't picked someone like Alexander Haig. Gary could live with Baker running the country.

They spent the evening watching CNN and the military channel. A summary of the events in America ran as a 3-hour special. There was even a brief mention of the bombing campaigns against Iraq, Damascus and Tehran. They learned for the first time that Russia had seized Iran. (Oops, how did that get into the broadcast, heads would roll?) The program wasn't a big deal because of what it reported; rather because of what it omitted. Amateur Radio wasn't censored and the name Saudi Arabia was the topic of frequent conversation on the amateur bands.

Finally, a Representative, not a part of the leadership in the House, called for an investigation of rumors that the US had wiped out Saudi Arabia. Bush couldn't deny it and the best defense was an offensive move, so Dubya got on the TV and revealed, for the first time, that he had directed an all out retaliation against Saudi Arabia for the assassination of Vice-President Cheney.

There wasn't an outrage on the radio or on the TV. The Democrats talked about impeachment and a few of the more questionable newspapers, the Chicago Tribune, the Los Angeles Times, the New York Times and the Washington Post, to name but a few, picked up the idea and ran with it. The Washington Times headline simply said "Bravo Bush".

"Happy birthday Gar-Bear," Ron said, "How old are we today?"

"We are two years younger than thee," Gary laughed. "Always have been, always will be."

"Yeah, yeah," Ron laughed. "That would make you 37, right?"

“Right,” Gary acknowledged, “Let’s see, 43 plus 25 is 68. I was born in 1968. Hurray.”

“I was just sitting here thinking about Palmdale,” Ron said, “Do you suppose that Clarence made it through the attacks?”

“I’ve been thinking about him a lot too,” Gary admitted. “Do we dare risk a trip back to Palmdale to see if we can find him?”

“No way partner,” Ron said, “But if he made it, I’d expect him just to drive in someday. I sent him a map on how to find the place right after Linda and I got here. Never heard back from him.”

Clarence and Lucy were traveling to Holbrook to surprise Ron, Gary Linda and Sharon. They were in Flagstaff when the balloon went up. They still were in Flagstaff and very much alive. Clarence had been trying for over a year to complete the journey to Holbrook, but a group who had taken over the town sealed Flagstaff up tight. Every time Lucy and he tried to sneak out, they had been stopped.

They were going to try one more time. Clarence was 66, Lucy 65. They were just too old to try and walk to Holbrook, at least that’s what the animals that controlled Flagstaff thought. Clarence had a rifle he had gotten from a guard who had foolishly fallen asleep 4 months earlier. All he had was the single 30-round magazine for the M16A2 that had been in the gun when he’d taken it.

Because of Lucy and his earlier attempts to escape, the motel room they still occupied was searched early and repeatedly. The animals couldn’t find the gun because the gun wasn’t in the motel room or the motel. Clarence hadn’t moved the gun more than 20’ from the spot he’d taken it from. The sleeping man was guarding a gun store. The M16A2 was in the gun store the man had been guarding. The animals had since given up guarding the gun store and they were going to bug out on foot as soon as he recovered the rifle.

They had saved a little food here and there and had enough candy bars, boxes of cereal and junk food to fill a small shopping bag. In the middle of the night, the two seniors crept to the gun store. Clarence put a wet newspaper on the glass and broke out the glass in the front door. He retrieved the weapon and 2 twenty round boxes of .223 he spied lying on a shelf and they began to walk.

Their motel was at the 201 exit ramp. The gun store was nearby. They paralleled I-40 until they got to Cosnino. After 16 months, the guards had apparently gotten lax. Clarence found a lot of cars, but it took him a while to find one with air in the tires and gas in the tank that would start. They hit Holbrook 2 hours later and drove in to The Res just like Ron had predicted 4 days earlier.

“Somebody tell Ron and Gary that the Tenth Calvary has arrived,” Clarence told Jim Lit-

tletree.

“You must be Clarence and Lucy,” Jim said.

“You were expecting us?” Clarence asked.

“Only for 16 months,” Jim said.

Gary was so excited to hear the Clarence was there that he dropped his NRA coffee mug. Ron just smiled. There was a time when someone had referred to them as the Three Old Geezers. Well, at least they had the Colt SAA and Winchester carbine they’d taken off the Lakota’s. Maybe Fred Nichols had a western rig that would fit Clarence.

“Gary! Ron! How are you?” Clarence greeted them.

“Where in hell you been?” Ron asked.

“What you said,” Clarence replied.

“Huh?” Ron responded.

“Hell, Ron. I’ve been in Hell for 16 months,” Clarence said.

That much was certain. Both Clarence and Lucy were gaunt and looked like they hadn’t had a decent meal in years. Ron and Linda put them up in the spare bedroom. Ron had a private conversation with the two Jim’s.

Knowing how much Ron’s request meant to both Ron and Gary, Jim T. got his man grading the spot for the slab. His other men put in the water, sewer, electrical lines and telephone lines. Jim L. finally found a new triple wide in Gallup and it took them 3 trips to haul the sections.

By the time Clarence and Lucy were fit and able to move out of Ron and Linda’s home, their own new triple-wide was ready to occupy. It didn’t have a basement or shelter but it was new and huge and full of new furniture. Because they’d had to flee, the Rawlings only had the clothes on their backs. Clarence and Lucy knew they were home when Linda handed Lucy the keys to their new home and Ron and Gary handed Clarence a western gun rig complete with a Colt SAA and a Winchester carbine. Now by golly, if they could just find some horses...

Only in America – Chapter 11 – Clarence

Ron and Gary, Sharon and Linda, led Clarence and Lucy to the warehouse.

“The official uniform for the Tenth Calvary,” Ron explained, “Is a blue work shirt, jeans, cowboy boots and a wide-brimmed hat. We have a truckload of Wranglers, what size do you wear?”

“Uh, 38” waist with a 34” inseam,” Clarence replied, “Are there any slims? I don’t want them baggy in the butt.”

“All kinds partner,” Ron laughed at the baggy comment. “The shirts are over there and the boots are in the next aisle.”

“What’s your hat size Clarence?” Gary asked.

“7³/₈,” Clarence responded.

Gary left to rummage around in the hats. He came back carrying a white hat and a straw hat both size 7³/₈. Clarence had his Wranglers and several shirts. He started to try on boots and was having one hell of a time getting the western cut boots on.

“Clarence, what size are you trying on?” Gary asked.

“Eleven,” Clarence answered.

Gary moved down the aisle and fished two boxes out of the stack.

“Here you go partner,” he laughed, “Boots for us grown-ups.”

“What are those?” Clarence asked.

“Laredo’s,” Gary said pulling up his pant leg, “Look like the real thing, but they’re short topped and have a zipper.”

Sharon, Linda and Lucy had gone through the large stock of women’s clothing and they had dresses, slacks, tops, under garments and shoes. The six of them hauled all of the clothing to Clarence and Lucy’s new home and laid it on the bed in the master bedroom.

“Now Clarence,” Ron said, “We use the white shoe rule on wearing the hats.”

“Huh?” Clarence replied.

“You know how they used to only wear white shoes from Easter to Labor Day?” Ron laughed. “We wear our straw hats from Easter to Labor Day and the white hats the rest of the year and on special occasions.”

“Any other crazy rules I need to know about?” Clarence laughed.

“Just one,” Gary said, “This crazy bunch of Indians all call each other cousins whether they’re related or not.”

“Oh, like bro, huh?” Clarence smiled.

Ron related the conversation that took place on the trip to Phoenix to Clarence. Clarence gave Gary a strange look and shook his head. He confided to Ron that that didn’t surprise him one bit, as supposedly smart as Gary was, he was just so dense sometimes. Ron couldn’t agree more.

“After you get your clothes changed, come back to the house for lunch,” Linda directed. “We still have to get you dishes and pots and pans and food.”

“What’s for lunch?” Clarence asked.

“Your favorite partner, poke chops and tater salad,” Ron laughed.

It was purely amazing to see the changes in Gary and Ron. For the past 16 months, they had tended to be fairly quiet and only joked around occasionally. Now that Clarence had finally shown up they were all smiles and were cutting up and clowning around like their old selves back in Palmdale.

In a way, the attitude they had had for the past 16 months had been a benefit for the men. It had sharpened their edge and they didn’t take any crap from anyone. For Ron, that wasn’t a big change; but, Gary had changed dramatically. Although Gary’s health issues tended to make him grumpy, he had always been pretty laid back. No more, he could clear leather with the best of them and he did so with increasing frequency. Considering the times, maybe that wasn’t all bad.

After lunch, Gary presented Clarence with a Sonny Crockett rig. He explained that he had gotten Fred Nichols to shorten the barrel and magazine of one of the Remington 870, pistol-gripped cruisers to the 12” version. Their SOP, he explained to Clarence was to wear their hog legs and carry their Winchester carbines if they weren’t expecting trouble. In a situation that looked like they might get into combat, they wore the Sonny Crockett rig, an M1911 and carried a M1A Springfield.

“How many peoples there be here?” Clarence asked.

“Over 100,” Gary said, “We really haven’t taken a census. We have done a lot of scavenging, too. There’s about 750 thousand gallons of diesel fuel sitting in those tankers out there. We have double redundancy on our electrical, too. If we lose power, the first big generator kicks in and if it goes down for any reason, there’s an identical second generator. After that, there are still the two 30kw units in the shelters.”

“You had anyone attack this place?” Clarence asked.

“Not yet,” Gary reported. “Bush made that announcement about a year ago about lawless elements or some such BS, but no one has bothered us. Besides Clarence, we sort of have a built in buffer zone with those 400 or so folks living in Holbrook.”

“I suppose you boys have been out stripping National Guard Armories and the like. Where are all of the machine guns?” Clarence asked.

“Clarence, we’ve been as good as gold,” Gary answered, “and, we haven’t stolen anything.”

“Yeah right,” Clarence said, “I suppose that all those trailers and semi tractor-trailer rigs just drove themselves to this ranch, huh?”

“Salvage Clarence,” Gary replied, “Pure salvage.”

“How many towns have you stripped so far,” Clarence asked.

“Only two,” Gary responded sheepishly.

“You know, way back when, I was going to get the two of you to take me down to Fort Huachuca,” Clarence said, “But I suppose that is pretty much out now.”

“Fort what?” Ron asked.

“Fort Huachuca (wah-chew-ka),” Clarence replied. “It’s down by the Mexican border in a town called Sierra Vista.”

“Why on earth would you want to go there?” Ron continued.

“You fellas know how interested I’ve always been in the Tenth Calvary,” Clarence explained, “It seems that they have this Buffalo Soldier Statute at their main gate. The Fort is used by the Arizona National Guard for training now; but, back in 1913, the 10th Cavalry ‘Buffalo Soldiers’ arrived and remained almost 20 years. The 10th Cavalry joined General John J. Pershing in the 1916 expedition into Mexico and, during World War I it was assigned the mission of guarding the United-States-Mexico border.”

“Oh great,” Gary complained, “You want us to travel almost the full length of Arizona just so you can look at a Statute.”

“Naw, Gary,” Clarence said, “That was before the attacks.”

“Hold your horses Gary,” Ron said, “It might not be a bad idea.”

“Ron, you heard Bush,” Gary protested, “They MOPPED up all the troops and sent them to ground. That Fort is probably crawling with soldiers. I don’t want any part of it.”

“Maybe and maybe not,” Ron insisted. “Anyway, it wouldn’t hurt us just to take a look at it.”

“Over my dead body,” Gary insisted.

“That,” Ron kidded, “Can be arranged.”

On the first of May, 2 pickups, carrying 12 men, left the ranch headed toward Ft. Huachuca. They had finally won Gary over, sort of. They headed south and while they were passing through Show Low, Ron spotted a National Guard Armory. The sign said, ‘1404th Transportation Company’. Show Low was a ghost town.

They drove the entire day and ended up detouring a few miles to spend the night at Tombstone, also a ghost town. The Hole in the Wall Gun Shop was full of firearms of all descriptions, especially Cowboy Action Arms. They filled one pickup with their salvage from the shop and half filled the second. They backtracked to Arizona 82 and drove on down to Sierra Vista. The men pulled up short when they spotted people in the town.

“See, I told you,” Gary huffed. “There are people all over the place.”

“Yeah, well, you were right,” Ron admitted, “But that and a quarter won’t get you a cup of coffee at a Holiday Inn.”

“Huh?” Gary responded. “What’s the Holiday Inn...”

“Never mind Gar-Bear,” Ron said.

The men waited until the wee small hours of the morning and then cautiously drove to the main gate of Ft. Huachuca. Security was very light and a single guard maintained a post at the front gate. They spotted the Buffalo Soldier Statute and Ron made an Executive Decision. They sneaked up to the gate and grabbed the guard before he could put out the alarm. They used a roll of duct tape to bind his arms, feet and cover his eyes and mouth.

The twelve of them then took the statute of the Buffalo Soldier and loaded it into the back of the half filled pickup. The bronze statue was heavy; they almost didn’t get it loaded. Some might question their actions of the morning, but there was no one in the entire US that was more devoted to the memory of the Buffalo Soldier than Clarence Rawlings. His mother had always insisted that his great uncle had been a hero in Black Jack Pershing’s expedition into Mexico.

When they got back to the ranch late that evening, they secured the guns in the shelter’s armory, but left the statute on the pickup. The next day, Jim Thomas tried to dupli-

cate the base of the statute at Fort Huachuca, as best he could, in the center of Clarence's new front lawn. Jim Littletree painted a second sign and hung it beneath the sign saying *The Res*. The new sign read, *New Home of the 10th Calvary*. Down at Fort Huachuca, the guard who had allowed himself to be overpowered was suddenly a buck private. The Commander of the Arizona National Guard called the theft a sacrilege and vowed to recover the statue at all costs. Meanwhile...

Twelve men loaded into the front and back of Ron's pickup and headed for Show Low. Even Transportation Company's must have some personal weapons, like M16's or Beretta's. They were surprised with what they found at the Armory. There were 2½-ton trucks, 5-ton trucks, more than two-dozen 50kw diesel generators, fuel tanker trailers plus the weapons.

Gary had hoped to come up with some heavy-duty weapons like some LAW rockets, AT-4's or Mark 19's. The heaviest weapons they found were two Humvee mounted M-2, .50 caliber machine guns. The 5,000-gallon tanker trailers were full, too. They loaded the generators onto the 5-ton trucks and towed 11 tanker trailers back to the ranch, 2 were pulled by the Humvees; the 5-ton and 2½-ton trucks pulled the rest.

The Company was equipped with the M-4 carbines, but there were more M-9 Beretta's than carbines. They planned to return the next day to get the other 5 tanker trailers. The military trucks were multi-fuel motors, so they returned the trucks they'd salvaged from Holbrook back to Holbrook. They had loaded the trucks with excess supplies taken from the semi trailers. The resident's of Holbrook were ecstatic.

The next day, enough men returned to Show Low to recover the remaining trucks and fuel trailers. The 50kw generators were set next to the trailers and Clarence and Lucy's home to provide them with a second level of backup power. They didn't have any more automatic transfer switches and no one wanted to drive all the way to Phoenix to get any; at least not yet anyway. They stabilized the fuel in the 5,000-gallon trailers and parked a fuel trailer next to each generator. If they got down to relying on those generators, they had a whole lot more to worry about than just electricity.

Periodically, the electrical generation station in Holbrook ran out of coal and the electricity remained off until the government got off its dead butt and sent another trainload. Finally, it came time to service the primary generator and they realized that they didn't have everything they needed to do the job. There was no choice; Phoenix was their next stop.

On the morning of July 15, 2006, four pickups carrying 24 men left for Phoenix. Gary, Ron and Clarence rode shotgun in 3 of the pickups; each was armed with their Sonny Crockett rigs, a M1A rifle and a M1911. All of the other men carried the compact M-4 carbines and Beretta M-9s. They got to Phoenix in 3½ hours without incident. They loaded up all of the 400 amp automatic transfer switches they could find and enough spare parts and service items to keep the big generators running for a very long time.

They avoided US 60/AZ 360 and were returning to Mesa along Baseline Road when Ron noticed a roadblock completely closing off Baseline. Ron grabbed the mike to the CB radio and gave the other trucks a heads up. The trucks pulled to a rapid stop and the men began to discuss their next move.

"I'm in favor of turning around and jumping onto US 60 at the nearest onramp," Gary suggested. "I don't know what that roadblock is all about, but I'm not so sure we want to find out."

"Makes sense to me," Clarence agreed.

"You got it partner," Ron also agreed, "You always win the fights you avoid."

Gary reached over and placed his palm on Ron's forehead. Ron jerked back.

"What the heck," Ron started to say.

"I was just checking your temperature partner. You must be sick. That's the first time you ever agreed with me on anything," Gary said.

"Screw you," Ron laughed.

They got back into the pickups and retracted their steps on Baseline until they saw a sign for US 60. They turned right and headed the short ½ mile to the interstate. They were almost to the ramp when they came under heavy fire. The roadblock was the diversion; the real trap was at this onramp. The pickups screeched to a halt. They were taking heavy fire, mostly from full auto AK's from the sounds of it. They bailed out, but had nowhere to run. Some of the men were down, but no one could tell if their wounds were life threatening. Johnny was along, but he didn't dare move from cover. The men from the ranch with the M-4's began returning fire, some firing full auto and some firing single shots.

Gary, Ron and Clarence didn't return fire at first because they had no clear targets. They tried to get the other men to switch from full auto to semi-auto, spray and pray was a poor battle tactic. Some of the men switched, but the majority did not. Most of the men carried 20 mags for their carbines, but those using full auto quickly exhausted their supply of ammo.

The attackers were well camouflaged and it was several minutes before any of the 3 men armed with the M1A's got off a shot. The attackers wore Kevlar vests but didn't have ballistic plates in them. The .308's went through the Kevlar like a hot knife through butter and put the people down in a hurry. The people hit by the .223 ball ammo often were able to continue fighting.

The men who were out of ammo finally switched their carbines to semi auto and were given mags by the more conservative shooters. At best, they were in a standoff, at

worst, they were hopelessly pinned down. Finally the volume of fire slowed to a trickle and they were able to clear the vehicles and get to the right side of the street with only a couple of the men getting hit.

Johnny bandaged the wounded men who made it to the side of the street. The guys with fanny packs reloaded as many of their magazines as they had ammunition and the men worked out a plan. Obviously, they would have to flank the attackers; a straight-ahead assault would be suicide.

Six of the cousins would try the flanking maneuver and Gary, Ron, Clarence, Derek and Jim Thomas would lay down suppressing fire. Johnny was too busy attending to the wounded to participate. He had bravely recovered 3 men from the street and would go for a fourth when the suppressing fire began. While the cousins figured out their plan of attack, the three men with the .308's reloaded their 20-round magazines. Each man carried one in his rifle and 12 spares.

Littletree waived his hand to signal the men to begin the suppressing fire and the five of them began to fire in the general direction of the attackers. Johnny belly crawled to the street and grabbed Jake, who had a leg wound. The 5 men maintained a steady, measured rate of fire. Fifteen minutes later, they heard the roar of the M-4 carbines from the area of the attackers. They waited until Jim Littletree waived a blue bandana signaling the all clear.

Johnny rushed to attend to the fallen men and the other five got in Ron's pickup and drove up to where the ambushers had been. The attackers lay dead. There were only 11 men and most of them were wearing the baggy pants and garb typically associated with gang bangers.

They were well armed, sporting AK-47's and cardboard boxes filled with loaded 40 round magazines. They gathered the AK's and magazines and put them in the back of Ron's truck. The excitement had been too much for Ron and he was experiencing an Angina attack. A nitro tablet under his tongue relieved his symptoms and he went to sit in his truck.

Gary noticed that Clarence's left sleeve was torn and he rushed to Clarence to see if he was hurt.

"Went right through the shirt sleeve Gary," Clarence smiled. "And I really liked this shirt, too."

"These parts and transfer switches turned out to be pretty expensive," Gary said looking around. "I wonder how many people we lost."

The answer was rapid in coming. No one had been killed but two were shot up pretty badly. Johnny said that he was low on Ringer's and that they'd have to find a medical supply house or hospital just to be able to get everyone back to the ranch.

Gary went over to Ron's truck and pulled out the Phoenix Yellow Pages. The nearest medical supply house was a hell of a lot closer than the nearest hospital. Two of the pickup boxes were empty, so they laid the more seriously wounded men in the back of those two trucks.

One of the cousins who had advanced first aid training stayed with the less seriously wounded men and Johnny stayed with the men who were badly hurt. They headed for the medical supply house as fast as they dared drive. Drug addicts had looted the place but apparently had only taken a little morphine. Everything that they needed was available in large quantities.

There was room in the third pickup for several cases of Ringers, D5W and Normal Saline. There were two company delivery vans parked in the parking lot and Ron suggested that they use those to transport the injured and load the pickups up with extra supplies.

The injured men were loaded in the two vans. All of the generator parts and switches were transferred to a single pickup and the vans and pickup load of parts departed for the ranch. The men went through the medical supply house with a fine-toothed comb. The addicts had missed a large quantity of morphine and they hadn't touched any of the antibiotics. They loaded all of the painkillers, antibiotics and a lot of other medicines aboard the three pickups and set off for the ranch. They left behind several truckloads of medical supplies. These supplies were worth the risk; they'd come back tomorrow.

When the three pickups of supplies arrived back at the ranch, Johnny had the wounded men in the medical center and was attending to their wounds. Everyone was going to survive, but Johnny had had his first experience in meatball surgery. If the men hadn't needed him so badly, he probably would have been well into a bottle, so shaken was he from the experience.

"Why in the hell didn't we take the Humvees and the Ma Deuces?" Ron asked.

"I guess we didn't expect trouble Ron," Gary said, "We've been to Phoenix so many times without any trouble except at the gun store that time."

"When we go back tomorrow, we're taking the Humvees and the 5-ton trucks," Ron said.

"Do you really think you should go tomorrow Ron?" Gary asked, "I saw you slip that nitro tablet under your tongue."

"Hell Gar-Bear," Ron laughed, "I have to take nitro a couple of times a week. It's no big deal. Besides you ain't big enough to stop me."

"Ok, ok," Gary said. "Have it your way. Just make sure you take your nitro with you."

The next day, they took the 2 Humvees, 8 semis and 8 5-ton trucks. They cleaned out the medical supply house and two others. They then went to a hospital and salvaged 8 5-ton truckloads of beds, sheets, surgical equipment, x-ray and lab equipment and drugs. With all of medical equipment and supplies they had, they could equip a fairly good-sized hospital. All they needed was a medical doctor and some trained nurses.

When they got back to the ranch, they spent two days inventorying the truckloads of supplies. Two semis were dispatched to Holbrook to supply the resident's with supplies they no doubt could use. While they were there, the drivers and the two men in the pickup that went along to drive them back to the ranch got a list of prescription drugs the Holbrook residents needed. When they got back to the ranch, a year's supply of drugs was loaded on a truck for the people in Holbrook; it barely made a dent in their supplies. The people at the ranch were fast accumulating credits with the Holbrook residents.

The electricity was back on. Apparently George had gotten another trainload of coal delivered to the Holbrook power plant. All of the men and a lot of the women were working at the plant keeping it operating. In fact, it was the only work being done by the Holbrook residents. Each trainload of coal also included one boxcar of food and supplies for the residents. It was the only form of payment the government could give them for their work.

The military had finally managed to finish burying the dead and were now in the process or restoring law and order to the country. Martial law was still in effect but like the residents of the ranch many people ignored it. The agricultural production that Bush had promised so long ago had materialized but the output from the heartland was far below government expectations. There were just too many dead farmers.

The second year, the production had improved significantly because many city people were forced to become farmers. Telephone communications had been sporadically restored, principally to communities with military reservations. The Internet was even up in the cities with telephone service, but there were few websites. Mostly, organizations like the news media had websites, much to the chagrin of the administration. Holbrook was months, perhaps years from having phone service again.

After the big shoot out in Phoenix, the residents of the ranch, especially the young people like Ron and Gary's kids had a whole new attitude about security and the reality of the situation. Derek had never had any illusions; he had seen Kosovo up close and personal. So had Mary. During her tour of active duty, before she met Derek, she had spent her 6 months in Kosovo. [So help me God] Both of them were pretty closed mouth on the subject. The closest anyone could get to a description of his and her experiences was, 'you have no idea what the rest of the world is like'.

With the influx of free oil, Russia had experienced an economic revival unparalleled in its history. Between their oil reserves and the Iranian oil reserves, Russia was a major

oil exporter. The Israelis had waited for the radiation levels to die down and had seized Saudi Arabia. They, too, were a power to be reckoned with.

Rather than fight Israel, Egypt had maintained the peace and the Israelis and they got along well indeed. The Palestinian question had been resolved, too. The Israelis had gone to war with the Palestinians, killing millions. They hadn't had a bombing in over a year. Since Saudi Arabia had 25% of the proven oil reserves in the world, the Israelis were rich and becoming richer. They offered oil to the US at an unheard of low price, finally willing to repay the US for almost 60 years of blind support.

The cousins had finally located some horses for the ranch. Gary insisted that they give him the most gentle of the horses. They gave him a 13-year-old mare and promised him that no one could even get her to walk fast. He hadn't been on her five minutes when she took off on a dead run. When he finally got her to stop, Gary got off and took a good look at the horse.

There was something awfully familiar about the face. He named her Salina. Once Salina realized that she wasn't going to be able to call Gary's bluff, she settled down and he actually learned to ride a horse. The three of them, Ron, Clarence and Gary took to riding the fence line every day.

Clarence had brought up the subject of making a return visit to Flagstaff several times. Each time he had done so, the residents of the ranch had begged off, asserting that they lacked the firepower to take on the bunch that was holding Flagstaff. He hadn't had a chance to bring it up after they liberated the two Humvees from Show Low, the shootout in Phoenix had occurred too soon after. But now, all of the wounded were healed up and he thought it was about time he brought the matter to a head.

It was the middle of September 2006. Most of the garden had been harvested except for the potatoes and melons. They had butchered 4 market weight steers and everyone's freezer was full. Jim Thomas had found time to put in 12 more slabs and the ranch was supporting 12 more families. The population was approaching 150 men, women and children. Clarence considered the issue carefully. They had arms and ammunition and almost as many people as were holding Flagstaff. He intended to push until everyone agreed to attack Flagstaff and free the citizens under the thumbs of those gangsters or whatever they were. He brought the subject up on a morning ride.

"Fellas, we's got to get to Flagstaff and free all those peoples those gangsters are holding prisoner," Clarence started.

"We're probably outnumbered and outgunned, Clarence," Gary said, "Do you really think that is a good idea?"

"Yes Gary, I do," Clarence replied. "In the first place, the gangsters didn't have anything but rifles and pistols. We have two Ma Deuces. When Lucy and I left out of there back in March, they were becoming disorganized. We can't just sit here and ignore those peo-

ple in Flagstaff. If the two of you won't go, I get some of the others and we'll do it ourselves."

"Hold on a minute partner," Ron said, "Nobody said we wouldn't do it. Gary just asked if you were sure. You said yes. As far as I'm concerned, that's the end of the subject, we're going."

"All right Ron," Clarence said, "Are you in too Gary?"

"Anything you can do I can do better," Gary said, the thought of the old song popping into his head.

"You're such a flake sometime Gar-Bear," Ron laughed. "Ok, when are we going to do this thing?"

"I say Sunday," Clarence answered quickly. "That bunch always gets drunk on Saturday nights and they's usually all hung over on Sunday."

"Ok," Ron replied, "We'll attack Flagstaff the day after tomorrow."

When they got back and had the horses unsaddled and brushed down, the three men went looking for the two Jim's. They recounted the conversation they'd had while riding and asked the men's opinions. Both Jim's agreed with them and said they'd been wondering when this was going to happen. There was no time like the present they said, everyone was healed up and there weren't any projects underway.

Sunday was fine with them, they'd get the word out and they could leave Saturday night. The ranch suddenly became alive as the 65 men cleaned their guns, loaded the magazines to their rifles and made sure their gear was in top condition. Mary would take over security at the ranch while the men were away. She had a lot of the women at the firing range and it was a tossup whether the men or women were the fiercest warriors.

Saturday morning, everyone was ready to go. All of the men assembled in Gary's basement because it was the largest meeting room on the ranch. One of the men had produced a Flagstaff map from when his wife and he had lived there and Clarence used a highlighter and marked the guard locations, sleeping quarters and everything he'd observed in his 16 months in Flagstaff.

He told them some things had probably changed, but this bunch was pretty lazy and they ruled by the force of the gun. They were the only ones in all of Flagstaff with guns, too. That had been the first thing they'd done, disarming the populous. Based on Clarence's information Derek outlined a simple plan. They would move in right after dark and observe the men through the night. That would pretty much guide their battle tactics.

No one, he said, benefited from a direct confrontation. After they all passed out, the men would move into positions in Flagstaff that allowed them to kill the gangsters from hiding. The two Humvees could rush the town just after sunrise, firing at will. The gangsters could be expected to pile out of their roosts to meet the attack. Wipe them out, he advised.

They loaded food and medical supplies on 5 of the 5-ton trucks. If they were successful, the residents of Flagstaff would no doubt be in need of food and medical treatment. They left at sunset and arrived on the outskirts of Flagstaff less than two hours later. The men followed the plan outlined exactly and by 9pm were all in position to observe what was going on in Flagstaff.

From what they could see, the residents were being held in the gymnasiums of the three public High Schools. The party was getting loud as the gangsters filled their guts with rotgut. Flagstaff had a population when the balloon went up in the low 60,000's. The men couldn't really tell, but it appeared to them that the population was at most, 1,500. This bunch of gangsters must be a hard lot if 75-100 men could keep 1,500 people at bay. Of course, they had all the guns, didn't they?

After midnight the partiers began to go to bed. By 2am, no one was moving in Flagstaff. The doors to the High School gymnasiums had been chained and padlocked around 8pm. There appeared to be a dozen guards and they were positioned, 4 each on the western, eastern and southern approaches to the city. Derek sent two teams of two to cover the western guards and southern guards. The remainder of the men moved into position to take out the gangsters when the Humvees hit town. Gary, Ron and Clarence were to lay back and snipe anyone that popped up from an unexpected location.

The sky to the east was just beginning to lighten when the Humvees rolled into town guns roaring. They took out the 4 eastern guards in a single volley. The two teams watching the western and southern guards opened up with their M-4's at 100' range. The men went down like wheat before the scythe. Men began to stumble out from where they had collapsed the evening before and walked right into a hail of bullets. Three men sudden appeared at the door of the bar where most of the festivities had taken place. Gary, Ron and Clarence took the men out in the blink of an eye, each one of the men shooting one of the three gangsters.

It was over in 3 minutes and 97 gangsters lay dead or dying. The men went around and made sure that the dying men were dead. They went to the High School gymnasiums and shot the locks off the doors, freeing the residents of Flagstaff. They quickly explained to the masses of people that they were from Holbrook and had come to set the people free. They had five truckloads of food and medical supplies waiting outside of town and would bring them in for the people.

It turned out that most of the staff of the Flagstaff Medical Center had survived the Thanksgiving tragedy. Gary, Ron and Clarence got to visiting with one of the doctors (a cardiologist) and his wife and learned that both were originally from Holbrook and that

the wife was a registered nurse. They asked and then begged the couple to come to Holbrook.

They had all of the equipment and supplies they would ever need and the population of Holbrook, including the ranch was now almost 600. The doctor's wife had seen all of Flagstaff she every wanted to see. She didn't give her husband much of a choice, they were moving to the ranch. Gary told her that one of the three would put them up until a home could be erected for them and that he hoped they wouldn't mind living in a triple-wide mobile home. Not at all, she said, it beat the hell out of a High School gymnasium. Gary dispatched Derek and one of the cousins to accompany the doctor and his wife to their home to retrieve whatever possessions they wanted to move to the ranch.

They loaded the trucks with lumber; they were going to need a hospital. Littletree and his cousins found a new triple-wide sitting on a dealer's lot and they hooked it up to the 5-ton trucks and towed the three sections back to the ranch. As soon as Thomas could get the slab poured, they would have the doctors home erected. Thomas had the slab installed in 3 days. Each of those 3 days, Littletree and several other men hauled supplies to Flagstaff and returned with loads of lumber. They ended up with enough materials to build a 20-bed hospital and a clinic. Things were definitely looking up at the ranch.

Only in America – Chapter 12 – Security Issues

Dr. John Robinson proudly opened his new hospital and clinic to tours by the residents of the small ranch. It was well equipped, considering that it had been equipped entirely with supplies and equipment salvaged from 3 medical supply houses and one Mesa hospital. The x-ray unit was portable, no one had wanted to try and dismantle a regular x-ray machine.

They didn't have a CT scanner or an MRI, but they had the complete operating room, painstakingly removed, piece-by-piece, from the hospital. They didn't have a built-in oxygen system, bottles would have to suffice. Robinson, a cardiologist/cardiac surgeon and his wife June, a surgical nurse, could handle most anything that came their way.

One of the returnees in Holbrook was the local dentist. The only medical staff they really needed was someone to handle anesthesia for any operations and more nurses. June suggested that they take her with them the next time they went to Flagstaff, she was certain that she could persuade two of the younger nurses from the hospital to come to the ranch. She went on to suggest that a third year resident at the hospital had the hots for one of the two nurses she thought she could persuade to come and, she informed them, he was an anesthesiologist.

The Jim's started to put in another row of slabs for mobile homes. They had gone through the armory in Flagstaff and had found more 50kw generators. They had left all of the weapons they had found with the residents of Flagstaff and admonished them that they'd better arm everyone with something. After their long months of humiliating captivity, the resident's hadn't needed to be given that advice; nearly every man and woman carried some type of firearm. The two nurses caved in to June's request and returned to the ranch. The young doctor showed up a few days later and promptly proposed to the nurse he had fallen in love with.

Ron and Gary had their fill of their children living with them and they asked the cousins to tow in some extra trailers for the kids. It was so peaceful and quiet after Damon, Derek, Lorrie, Amy, Paula, Jennifer and Brenda and their families moved out of the shelter that the two men began to wonder if they hadn't lost their minds somewhere along the way. Why hadn't they thought of this a year earlier? It was also about this time that the lesson of their raid on Flagstaff hit home.

"We sure did take care of that bunch of gangsters in Flagstaff," Clarence observed. "That turned out to be easy. It's amazing what you can accomplish with a little firepower."

"It was too easy, if you ask me," Gary observed.

"That was a smooth operation," Clarence insisted. "Derek really had that figured out good."

“My son, the military genius,” Gary crabbled.

“What’s eating you hoss?” Ron asked.

“We’ve never been attacked,” Gary said. “What if we were? Three stands of barbed wire wouldn’t even slow them down. Besides, there are the four triple wides and almost 3-dozen mobile homes now. The shelter’s were designed to be shelters, not fighting positions.”

“I never thought of that Gar-Bear,” Ron whistled.

“Another thing,” Gary elaborated, “We talk about Holbrook being our buffer zone. What if someone comes at us from a different direction?”

“We sure as hell can’t build a wall around 640 acres,” Ron snorted.

“No, we can’t,” Gary said, “But we could do something to secure this housing compound.”

“What would you suggest Gary?” Clarence asked.

“I’d suggest that we ask Derek,” Gary grinned, “He’s my military genius son, right?”

They did just that. Derek told them that the amount of materials and time it would take to enclose the compound wasn’t in their favor. He began to talk about overlapping fields of fire and impediments and all manner of military type things.

“How about you translate that all into English, son,” Gary suggested.

“Ok, sorry,” Derek said. “We start by ringing the compound with a trench, sort of a set of interconnected fighting positions. In front of those, we put in some concertina or something like it to stop the attackers before they get to the trenches. Further out, we put in some more concertina or something like it. That will at least slow down any attackers.”

“Where are we going to get concertina?” Gary asked, playing Devil’s Advocate.

“If we can get barbed wire on spools,” Derek said, “We can make our own. All you have to do is take the wire off the end of the spool instead of unrolling it.”

“Barbed wire we can get,” Ron said, “And we have a trencher, so it won’t be any problem cutting a trench all the way around the housing compound.”

“We’re going to need sandbags, too,” Derek said.

Ron got Jim Thomas to start putting in a trench about 30 yards out from the compound. That put the roadside trench too close to the road, so Jim halved the distance on that

side. A convoy consisting of the 2 Humvees and 6 5-ton trucks took off for Phoenix, one more time. Gary had given the men a list of several places that were listed under Farm Supplies in the Phoenix Yellow Pages. The trucks returned late that night, loaded with barbed wire. They had some fence posts too. Someone had suggested that they had to anchor the barbed wire every so often or the concertina barrier would be too flexible.

The following day, four men began to drive the steel posts about 20-yards apart. They found that if they pulled a coil of barbed wire off the end of the spool, and then rotated the spool, they could form barbed wire coils about 2' in diameter. There wasn't any shortage of wire and they spent long days putting in 3 coils of wire on both the near and far rows. They put gates in the center of each of the concertina barriers. There was an inner gate and an outer gate and the space in between was ringed with barbed wire.

Since the gates were sort of flimsy, Jim Thomas hauled several temporary concrete median dividers from his shop at Holbrook and positioned one at each inner gate. In a pinch, they could use the tractor to drag the barrier across the road against the inner gate. In total, the project took nearly a month. They couldn't stop an armored assault, but men on foot were at risk if they attacked the compound. The second anniversary of the Holocaust, as the men now referred to the events of Thanksgiving 2004, was approaching. They had food, supplies and a rudimentary defensive system. Things were far from perfect, but they were definitely looking up.

"You know guys," Gary said, "Back in the days of the Internet, I used to visit a website called Frugal Squirrels. During late 2003 and early 2004 there were all kinds of stories about intentional communities and post attack communities. There was *The Castle*, *The Ark*, *The Mine*, *al-Qaida*, *The Survivalist*, *The Hide* and *TEOTWAWKI*, just to name a few. There were some good ideas in some of those stories. They ranged from taking over abandoned prisons to building communities from scratch. I printed off copies of all of those stories so I could read them again. Why don't you all read the stories and see what ideas you can come up with to make this community of ours safer?"

Some of the men were slow readers and by January, they were still reading and taking notes. Others were faster and Gary laid copies of *Lights Out*, *Pax Americana*, and *Battle of Jakes* on them to read. It was March 2007 before they were ready to compare notes.

"Who is this Tired Old Man guy?" Clarence asked. "His characters are Gary, Ron and Clarence and they sound just like the three of us!"

Ron and Gary shrugged their shoulders and winked at each other.

"What ideas have you fellas gotten from the stories?" Gary asked.

"There aren't any prisons like that around here, so that idea is pretty much out," Fred said.

"That slip wall construction is a good idea," Jim Thomas said, "There are millions of

yards of rock around just waiting to be picked up. And, there are still plenty of ingredients for concrete up in Holbrook. We could start gathering rock and put in a slip form wall using the inner trench.”

“I agree,” Littletree said. “Those slip form homes are essentially built using the Farnsworth method so we could really save on energy if we build slip form homes to replace the trailers.”

“What about the alternative energy sources like the electric shingles and wind turbines?” Gary asked.

“Those would be great if any of us knew anything about them,” Thomas said, “But we don’t even have an electrician living here. I’d suggest that we just stick with the generators we have.”

“Guess we’d better get started gathering rock fellas,” Ron suggested. “Why don’t you lay out a plot map for the compound, cousin, and we’ll get everyone else out collecting building materials?”

In the process of gathering and dumping the rocks for the slip form walls, the residents inadvertently created a third barrier to protect themselves but rendered the inner trench unusable. The rock was piled high all around the circumference of the compound to limit the amount of moving it would take when they began to construct the slip form wall. By June they had thousands of yards of rock and they began to construct the slip form wall. Gary looked at the forms Littletree had constructed. He tried to tell Littletree he had it all wrong, but Jim just ignored him.

Littletree had constructed the forms the height of the wall and intended to slide them horizontally rather than vertically as Gary had envisioned. They started at one corner of the compound wall with two forms, one running east and west the other running north and south. It was a continuous pour and the residents of the ranch worked 4 on and 4 off. They poured from the corner to the gate in the middle of the east wall and the south wall all the way to the west wall. They took two days off while the walls cured and then moved the forms to the northeast corner and started in again. Soon, the east wall and the north and south walls were completed. They went to the northwest and southwest corners and poured to the west gate.

The residents were exhausted. The wall was 6’ above ground and was buried in the ground 5’. It was 3’ thick and solid. The continuous runs to Holbrook to reload the ready mix trucks had attracted some attention and pretty soon the residents of Holbrook who weren’t working at the electrical plant had pitched in and were helping.

The four triple-wide homes essentially formed a square and the 20,000 square foot warehouse sat above what had at one time been the third ravine. After the wall was finished two welders from Holbrook helped the resident construct the gates that they had

designed based on the gates contained in the Patriot Fiction. The principal guidance came from Halffast's *Lights Out* and a couple of other stories.

Each entrance had an inner and outer gate. The gates were made from 6" pipe. The pipe was also the hinge, sunk two feet into the ground and resting on a steel ball. The top of the gate went through 8 pieces of 3/4" plate that had been welded together after a reamed out 6" hole was cut in each. The plates were 3' long and were installed when the fence neared completion. The backstop for the side of the gate that didn't hinge was a 6" square steel tube/pipe that was held in place by 1" bolts 3' long and spaced 1' apart. The inner gate was overlain with 3/4" steel plate. The whole thing must have weighed several tons. Yet, floating on the steel ball, Gary's 4-year-old grandson, Junior, could push it open. The inner gate was hinged on the north side of the opening and the outer gate, constructed in the same manner, was hinged on the south side of the opening.

The outer gate had no steel plate. Instead, they took the homemade concertina and liberally applied it to the outsides of the gate. There was an identical arrangement at the gate opening on the west wall except that the inner gate was hinged on the south side and the outer gate on the north side. With the fence in and the compound far more secure, they threw a picnic and invited the resident's from Holbrook who were not working to attend. The compound was pretty good sized and if they kept the homes down to about 1,200 square feet, they figured they could build almost 100 densely packed homes. They would have to run both generators if the lights went out plus most of the 50kw military generators, but they could supply 100 amps of 240vac to each home.

The homes would have thick walls and 2"x6" interior Farnsworth construction. They wouldn't need air conditioners and a simple wood stove could keep them warm during the winter. They had a semi load of refrigerators and another of gas cook tops. They would need a few more refrigerators, but they had over 100 cook tops. The roofs would be flat and counter sunk below the walls. This gave them firing positions on the top of each house.

They got to talking, Ron, Gary and Clarence, about something Ron had noticed at the hospital that they had taken the operating room equipment from.

"I could be wrong, but I'll swear that the backup generator at the hospital in Mesa was diesel powered," Ron said. "If it was and if we could dismantle it and bring it up here, we might be able to avoid using the government diesel generators. They work fine, you understand, but having them sitting out among the houses isn't the best idea, in my opinion."

"There's only one way to find out Ron," Gary said, "We're going to have to drive to Mesa and look. We'd better take the forklift, too. Who knows how much that generator will weigh?"

"Don't most hospitals use natural gas to power their backup generators?" Clarence

asked.

“That or LP,” Ron said, “But I’d bet my bottom dollar that was a diesel rig.”

Littletree and Thomas were starting on the houses in the southeast corner of the compound. Thomas had poured a two-lane street in a straight line from the east to the west gate, but before he had made the pour, they dug down into the ravine and added several more septic tanks and extended the drain field. Once the street was in and the slabs poured for the houses, you could pump out the tanks through a 6” pipe, but couldn’t otherwise access them. The three old men got a semi and lowboy together and loaded the forklift on it. They got John, Kevin, Damon, Derek, and Jennifer and Brenda’s husbands to go with them to Mesa.

Damon had been an over-the-road trucker so he drove the semi. Kevin and John drove one Humvee and his son-in-law’s the other. Derek rode shotgun for Damon and the geezer’s were in Ron’s pickup right behind the lead Humvee. They drove straight to Apache Junction and got on the 360. They took it to the hospital exit and pulled into behind the hospital.

The men got out of the vehicles and Ron almost had a kitten right on the spot. The generator was diesel all right, but the operative word was generators, not generator. The hospital had a modular installation that used 4 725kw diesel generators identical to the ones on the ranch. They could only get two of the generators on the lowboy.

“You’re an idiot,” Gary kidded Ron, “Why didn’t you tell us there were 4 generators?”

“I only caught a quick glance Gar-Bear,” Ron defended himself, “But I was right, they’re diesel generators.”

“But there’s no way to haul 4 generators back to the ranch,” Gary protested. “And we’re going to have to pull the 4 automatic transfer switches, too.”

“Clarence,” Ron said, “Do you believe this guy? There are probably 50 lowboys and semis sitting around Phoenix. And, we need 3 of the 750kw generators to supply 100 amps per home. We find 4 generators and transfer switches all in one spot and he’s belly aching.”

“You made your point Ronald,” Gary huffed, “We best get busy dismantling this set up. Damon, you and Derek take a Hummer and find a semi that runs and a low boy. The rest of you get busy unbolting those generators from their pads.”

Everyone bowed at the waist to their new high lord and ruler, and then broke out laughing. Damon and Derek took off on a truck hunt while everyone else, including Gary, began to unbolt the generators and disconnect the automatic transfer switches. They had two generators and two transfer switches on the lowboy before Damon and Derek returned.

“Did you guys run into trouble?” Gary asked, “I was starting to get worried.”

“Of a sort,” Damon said not elaborating.

“We found a semi and lowboy right away Dad,” Derek explained, “But the fuel was bad and we couldn’t get it to start. We had 10 5-gallon cans of diesel fuel, so we should have just drained the tank and refilled it with fuel that we knew was good. But no, genius here cranked the battery dead.

“We spent two hours locating new batteries. We hauled them back to the truck, added the electrolyte and installed them. Then we had to drain both of the saddle tanks and refill them with the fuel we had along. That took us another two hours because we didn’t have the right tools and had to go hunting tools. That’s why it took us 5 hours to bring back a truck.”

“Do all brothers fight Ron?” Gary asked, “These two sound like Roger and me.”

“*Must be a family tradition,*” Ron sang, imitating Hank Williams, Jr.

“Let’s get this stuff loaded and out of here,” Gary suggested, “I’d like to get back before dark.”

They put the other two automatic switches in the back of Ron’s pickup and loaded the remaining two generators and the forklift on the second lowboy. Ron ended up driving the second semi because none of the other’s had ever driven anything bigger than a pickup. Ron had his problems, too. He’d driven furniture delivery trucks but never a semi. The split axles and complicated shifting arrangement gave him fits for the first 40 miles and that was all uphill. He finally got the hang of it when Damon got on the CB and gave him shift-by-shift instructions. They didn’t arrive at the ranch until well after dark.

The generators solved one problem and created another. Jim Thomas extended the generator slab and they mounted the automatic transfer switches inside of the storage warehouse. The new lines that the Arizona Public Service guys had put in would only carry 6,000 amps. In fact the lines to the property would only carry 8,000 amps. APS had to run new lines all the way from the power plant west of Holbrook to the property. Then, they had to run new power lines from the road to the service panels in the storage building. They tried to explain it all to the three old geezers but high voltage and step down transformers and all the stuff just confused them. It was interesting how they worked out paying for all of the work. That new power line cost them 4 head of beef, 4 pigs and 48 chickens.

The guys who had done the previous generator setup came back and hooked up the 4 new generators and the automatic transfer switches. That cost them one beef and two horses, with saddles. Littletree and Thomas and the other men concentrated on putting

up the new slip form homes. They took a break when they had the first 25 done to rest up and move from their mobile homes to the new houses. As fast as they emptied the 14'x70' homes, Damon pulled them to Holbrook and dropped them off. It was on the third day of his hauling the homes to Holbrook that the ranch got a faint call on the CB.

"This is Damon," they heard. "This is Damon. They're attacking Holbrook. I saw them, they're attacking Holbrook." The signal slowly became clearer as Damon approached the ranch. Brenda was covering the radio shack and she told Amy to warn everybody while she tried to find out what was going on. Amy took off like her hair was on fire and came out of Gary's house screaming, "Raid, Raid, Raid."

Damon was coming down highway 377 with the pedal to the metal. Brenda finally hooked up with him when he was about 5 miles north of the ranch. She'd never heard Damon so excited and he was holding the mike in his hand and using both hands to steer. Apparently, hundreds of cars had pulled into Holbrook from the west off I-40. Damon was just leaving Holbrook as the cars arrived, but he had heard gunfire, lots of gunfire he said, and was coming on at 80 miles an hour.

They had gotten lax at the ranch, they had never been attacked and the men didn't carry their weapons per the rules very often. The west gate was kept closed all of the time, but the east gate was open. While the men ran to grab their guns, the three old geezers who were always armed manned the gate waiting for Damon to show up. Damon was going so fast that he misjudged and skidded to a halt past the turn-in to the ranch. He quickly backed up and pulled the semi through the gate. Ron pulled the outer gate shut and rammed home the improvised deadbolts they'd figured out when they put in the gates. He quickly closed the second gate and rammed its deadbolts home. The ranchers were on the roofs of the 25 new homes and on the roof of the storage building by the time Damon pulled in.

Ron, Gary and Clarence hurried to their homes and got their MBR's, pistols and Sonny Crockett rigs. They climbed up on the steps built by the fence, slid their rifles through the barbed wire (3 strands above the fence) and waited. And waited. Everyone had a GMRS/FRS radio tuned to the same frequency, courtesy of the Radio Shack truck they'd found at a truck stop outside of Gallup. Derek was on top of the storage building with binoculars and they kept asking if he saw anything. At sunset, they were still asking and he was still telling him he'd let them know when he did.

Along about 9pm, the lights flicked out and the generators began to come online. That was a dead giveaway where the bad guys had advanced to; obviously, they were at the power plant. They maintained a watch all night but nothing happened. Littletree suggested that they get back to building homes but Thomas said there was no way any of his people were driving to Holbrook to refill their ready mix trucks.

Linda, Sharon and Lucy made several pots of coffee and began to hand it out with some sweet rolls they'd gotten out of the freezer and baked. The three men could see that everyone was getting uneasy so they called Derek down and asked him what they

should do. He suggested that they let about two-thirds of the men get some sleep and keep one-third on guard. He produced an air horn and said that they could use it to sound the alarm. Gary told him to go ahead and implement it, because they needed some sleep. Late in the afternoon, smoke began to rise from Holbrook.

“Gar-Bear,” Ron said, “We’ve can’t just sit here and let them burn down Holbrook.”

“What do you suggest partner?” Gary asked.

“Why don’t we get Kevin to drive and Derek to man the gun on one of those Hummers?” Ron suggested. “You’ve never seen Kevin drive, but from the number of speeding tickets I’ve paid over the years he’ll make a Hummer fly.”

They visited with Kevin and Derek about Ron's suggestion and Kevin was up for it. If Derek wasn't, he never let on. Gary told them they would stand by the radio in the other Hummer and that the boys should bug out if things got bad. They opened the east gate and the boys took off. From his vantage point with the Ma Deuce, the 6'2" tall Derek could see pretty well.

The power plant appeared ok and only a small section of Holbrook was burning. They parked the Hummer and walked the last mile into Holbrook. From what they could see, a gang had apparently taken over the town and had herded the residents into the high school gym. Kevin whispered that they should get the hell out of there and report so Derek and he slipped back to the Hummer and got on the radio.

“Dad, this is Derek,” Derek said.

“I hear you,” Gary replied, “What’s going on in town?”

“It looks like they herded everyone into the high school gym,” Derek reported. “Kevin and I see about 80 to 100 cars with California plates, but no sign of the bad guys.”

“What do you recommend?” Gary asked.

“Dad, we’ve got to help them. Put Mary in charge of security and you guys get here ASAP,” Derek suggested. “We’re about a mile south of town.”

The men boarded the pickups, 12 men to a truck, and headed for Holbrook. They had taken just long enough to get the suppressors for the rifles and were on their way. Fifteen minutes later, the truck reached the Hummer and they parked the pickups and dismounted.

“Are we going to do like we did in Flagstaff?” Ron asked.

“Won’t work,” Derek said, “There is no reason to believe that they’ll all get drunk tonight. You have the suppressors, how about we move in and around dark and start picking

them off?”

Jim Littletree and his cousins didn't have suppressors, but they all had brought along their compound bows and plenty of hunting arrows. They led the way and the waiting was even worse than the day before. They had to wait from just after 5pm until the sun set before they could move. Finally, just as the sun was beginning to set, the bad guys emerged from the high school.

The ranchers could only imagine what had been going on in there and the appearance of the blacks and Chicanos really got their blood to boiling. Jim and his cousins laid their rifles on the ground and crept off into the night. The others positioned themselves along the south side of town and they began to move forward into Holbrook too. The Indians drew first blood, catching two men who were walking along the north-south main street and giving them a permanent smile. Ron leaned over to Gary.

“I'm sure glad they're on our side,” he whispered. The cousins methodically took the gang bangers out in ones and twos. The men with the suppressed weapons, 6 were M1A's and the rest M16A2's, began to snipe whenever they could take someone out without drawing attention to the body. Finally one of the bad guys noticed a body and he fired several rounds into the air alerting the others. Jim and the cousins faded back to join the others and all of the men began to attack in earnest. It was going pretty good for a while; then several of the gang bangers went into the high school gym and came dragging out some gagged women.

“You mo-fos better give it up,” one of them yelled, “Or we're going to start killing these hostages.”

“Give it up yourself asshole,” Ron's baritone voice boomed. “We have you surrounded.” The ranchers didn't of course, but the bad guys didn't know it. The man who had told them to give it up shot the woman he was holding. That was the last bad decision he ever made. Six suppressed rounds riddled his body and he fell without uttering a sound. The other gang bangers realized that their threat would cause their own deaths and they quickly withdrew into the gym.

“What the heck are we going to do now?” Ron muttered.

“Everyone move in as close as you can get to the high school and shoot them when they come out,” Littletree said.

“What are you going to do Jim?” Gary asked.

“I'm going to burn the gym down,” Jim laughed and took off with his cousins.

“Jeez,” Ron said, “That fool Indian is just crazy enough to do it too.”

The men moved closer and they could see the cousins dragging plastic trashcans to the

doors and windows of the gym. Jim and his fellow Indians wadded up a lot of newspaper, magazines and the like and put it in the trashcans. They set fire to the cans and withdrew to a safe distance. The smoke slowly began to drift into the windows of the gym. In a few minutes, they heard someone yell "Fire" and moments later the doors to the gym burst open. They managed to take out almost fifty of the bad guys before one of them wised up and they stopped pouring out.

"Dang it," Clarence said, "I wonder how many of them are still in there?"

The Indians began to climb onto the roof of the gym. The gym had several skylights and when they looked in, they could see about 40 of the gangsters still inside. Jim got on his radio.

"There are about 40 of them. All the townspeople are in the bleachers tied up with duct tape," he reported. "Want us to try and take these gangsters' out?"

"Go for the people guarding the hostages first," Derek suggested over the radio. "We take out anyone who tries to escape."

Littletree positioned the cousins carefully and the men heard him say, "Now," over the radio. A volley of shots rang out, followed by still more shots as the cousins fired repeatedly through the skylights. A few of the gang members burst out the front door of the gym and were cut down.

A few of the more enterprising of the men tried the back door, but the Indians on the roof made short order of them. The ranchers slowly made their way to the gym. They freed the hostages. Several of the women had obviously been raped and three men from the power plant lay dead by the gym's stage. The ranchers told the women who had been assaulted and their husbands to get to the ranch where they had a hospital. Jim Thomas and several of his men commandeered some of the gangsters' cars and one car headed to the ranch and the others headed to the power plant.

There were 7 bodies at the power plant, apparently all personnel from the control room. From the shell casing lying on the floor, it was apparent that they had put up a struggle before being killed. The ranchers gently lifted the bodies and carried them outside. Six men piled into one car and went after the pickups, returning quickly with six of the trucks. They gently laid the seven men in the back of the trucks and drove back to town.

The car that headed to the ranch radioed when they were within range that they were coming in and to get the hospital ready for casualties from town. They added that none of the casualties were ranchers.

The first battle of Holbrook was over. Ten men and one woman were dead. Thirteen women had been raped.

Only in America – Chapter 13 – Moral Issues

Dr. John Robinson and his wife June were Protestants who attended Church regularly before the gangsters took over Flagstaff. They were neither Right to Lifer's nor big on Woman's Choice. The two of them had talked at length and took the position that in the case of rape or incest it was legitimate to use the morning after pill. Other than that, they opposed abortion.

One of the upside features of the so-called morning after pills was if the fertilized egg had already implanted itself in the wall of the womb, the pill had no effect. So, without saying a word to anyone, they administered the pills to the 13 rape victims. The women had been severely traumatized, but none had sustained any permanent injury to their bodies. The effects on their minds were something that there wasn't a pill for. Not having a bastard mixed race child to raise would help with the mental healing process. They said nothing to the victims about what they had done.

Jim Thomas and his crew went to his yard and dragged several concrete median dividers to the Interstate exits and created mazes that would slow vehicles down when they used the ramps. The three old geezers gathered up all of the AK's, magazines and ammo and gave them to the residents of Holbrook. Most of the people at the ranch, the men especially, were riddled with guilt over their failure to move on Holbrook the minute Damon came flying back with the news of the invasion. Over time they came to realize that had they done so, they would have just gotten themselves killed. Rushing into a battle without some objective and plan in mind was suicide.

When things calmed down, they resumed work on the second group of homes. When these homes were done, the ranchers still in the mobile homes moved and Damon hauled the trailers back to Holbrook. They had more homes now than residents and a few families from Holbrook moved to the ranch. By now, power had been restored and President Bush, not knowing of the attack and assuming that they were out of coal again, sent two trains filled with coal and two more carloads of supplies. The electrical grid around the US was slowly being restored and every time the Cholla plant went down, it caused a brownout.

All of the homes south of the dividing road through the compound were done and they started in on the next 25 homes where the trailers formerly sat. The three old geezers had decided that a section of ground wasn't enough by any stretch of the imagination and they laid claim to the five sections of ground, which surrounded Gary's section west of 377. They tracked down the well drilling equipment and after an accelerated learning process sunk a well on each of the sections.

They located irrigation pipes and had them installed. Each of the wells had an electric pump powered by one of the military generators. They installed Toro products to trip relays, which, in turn, opened the electric valves for the irrigation systems. The five sections of ground were graded, the Chaparral burned off and crops planted. The section immediately south of the ranch was planted with grass and the fence taken down and

moved a mile south.

The whole process had taken months. The homes were all done and most occupied, many of the Holbrook residents having moved to the ranch with its tight security. The eight miles of barbed wire fence proved to be a major challenge. They had to search far and wide to come up with enough steel fence posts and barbed wire, but they persevered and finally the fence was in. On the first anniversary of the Holbrook attack, they were already planning on a second compound to be built around a large community center and storage facility. They got one surprise too. The homes were so energy efficient that no one used more than 50 amps of electricity, and many used less. The new compound would have but a single gate, which would be cut into the north wall of the present compound.

“Huh,” Ron said, “We spend more time taking things down than we do building them.”

“What do you mean Ron?” Clarence asked, smiling.

“We put in the temporary defenses; and then we tear them down for permanent defenses,” Ron started in. “We had to move the concertina up against the new wall. We had to take out a mile of fence and move it. Now, we’re cutting a hole in the north compound wall.”

“Look at the bright side Ron,” Clarence tried to cheer Ron, “With the 200 new homes, we’ll have all the residents of Holbrook living here at the ranch. Security will be much less of an issue.”

“Are they all going to move down here?” Ron asked.

“Gary says that so many people asked that he had to start a waiting list,” Clarence laughed. “That’s perfect for an Obsessive Compulsive guy like Gary. He has a list for everything.”

“He may be Obsessive Compulsive,” Ron admitted, “But that compulsion of his saved a lot of peoples’ lives.”

“True,” Clarence agreed.

Gary, for his part, was totally dissatisfied with the security at the ranch. He’d gotten Jim Thomas to install a traffic maze on 377 north and south of the property and had insisted that someone man the mazes 24/7. Gary wanted more of the .50 caliber machine guns, LAW rockets, AT-4 rockets, and Mark-19’s. He fussed and nagged and needled until no one could stand to be around him. They finally gave in after the wall for the new compound was erected and 48 of them headed for Barstow, California.

The USMC maintained a huge logistic facility at Barstow and if there were one place in the country that they could find everything Gary wanted, it would be Barstow. They had

the ANG trucks from Show Low and every form they had found at the Armory. Gary got out his old typewriter and filled out a requisition form. It would be a bluff of monumental proportions.

They had lots of BDU's and military gear, so Derek selected the people who could successfully pass themselves off as military and had someone shear their locks. Some of them discovered that they had ears for the first time in years. The ANG had finally moved back into Flagstaff and the rancher's were able to learn who the Commanding General of the ANG was. Gary typed his name on the Requisition and scrawled an unreadable signature. They were good to go.

They set off in the Humvees and 5-ton trucks for Barstow, hoping to find the facility deserted but prepared with the forged paperwork just in case. Had you not known that the convoy was from the ranch, you would sure have thought it to be a legitimate military convoy.

Derek had temporarily promoted himself to major, the gold leafs and a set of 1st Lieutenant Bars were all that they could come up with. It must have worked because they transitioned the military checkpoint at Needles without a hitch. They continued to Barstow in pursuit of their armament. None of them gave a thought to Camp Navajo.

The virus had hit the Marine Depot at Barstow hard and it was newly staffed with a few civilians and some raw Marine Corp recruits barely out of boot camp. The operation was haphazard at best. They had poor communications with the Corps and all branches of the armed forces frequently showed up with requisition forms for Corps armament.

No one was even surprised when an ANG convoy showed up with a requisition for all kinds of weapons and ammunition. The major in charge of the ANG detachment was so spit and polished, one would have thought he was a brand new Marine Corps 2nd Lieutenant. When one of the civilians protested his demand for the Mark-19's, he'd simply said, "Fine with me, take it up with the General."

The civilian decided he didn't want to have any General, ANG or otherwise, chewing his behind and he caved in to the request for 12 Mark-19's. They issued the 24 .50 caliber machine guns, 400 LAW rockets, 200 AT-4 rockets, 12 60mm and 6 81mm mortars and thousands of rounds of ammunition. They even had to loan the ANG guys some of their 5-ton trucks because the ANG guys' eyes were bigger than their stomachs. The only person who might have seen through the whole charade was a grizzled old Gunnery Sergeant, but he was down in Yuma attending a meeting. The convoy transitioned back to the ranch without incident. The Marine Corp vehicles were driven to Phoenix and parked at an abandoned ANG Armory.

To say that Gary was ecstatic would be to deny his true feelings. It was a monumental coup. He insisted that Littletree and Thomas stop their home construction and build guard towers ringing the compounds. They had barely started on the homes, having only put in the utility lines and formed some of the slabs, so the two Jim's took time off and

put in 12 guard towers around the perimeter of the compounds. With a range of 2,000 meters and an effective range of 1,400 meters, the Mark 19's had overlapping fields of fire and for the first time, Gary began to feel safe.

The two Jim's resumed the home construction and with all of the labor becoming available were soon completing 3 or 4 homes a day. Propane was getting hard to come by so the second 100 homes were all electric. When they had gone to Albuquerque to find the electric hot water heaters and cook tops, they brought back enough to swap out the LP gas units.

By the time the paperwork from Barstow Marine Corp Supply Depot reached the ANG, the Commanding General had been promoted and was in Washington, DC. His replacement was surprised at the requisition; to his knowledge the ANG didn't have any Mark-19's. He too had heard of the attack on Holbrook and the fact that the residents of some place called *The Res* had rescued the residents of Holbrook. *The Res* had just completed a massive building project and all the residents of Holbrook had moved to the place.

Apparently the same group of ranchers had rescued the residents of Flagstaff some time earlier. Hmm, he'd have to check into this place they called *The Res*. At the moment, however, he had bigger fish to fry. Why was it that the good died young but the bad seemed to live forever? He had gangs of men and women attacking the few settlements that had sprung up across Arizona. He couldn't spare the time or the men to check out *The Res*.

As the fifth anniversary of the Holocaust approached, the men and women at the ranch were living a gentle life. The cemetery across the road had slowly filled with the bodies of those foolish enough to attack *The Res*. Coal was flowing steadily to the power plant finally and every trainload of coal also included not only a boxcar of food but also four 24,000-gallon tank cars of diesel fuel. The diesel fuel was offloaded, stabilized and transported to the ranch.

The ranchers had been out scavenging again and had dumped the fuel from any tankers they found and drove the tankers back to the ranch. They weren't environmentalists, these ranchers. They had the capacity to store 1.6 million gallons of diesel fuel. It was roughly a 240-day supply if all of their generators went online at once. And, every month they gained about ten more days, net of what they used for their vehicles.

The last trainload of coal had included several cases of turkeys for the first time. The Fifth Anniversary Thanksgiving celebration would include more than just prime rib of beef for the first time in a long time. The three old geezers were holding court, as it were, in the new community center. A 2-story building with a basement containing offices and kitchens, the community center could seat the entire population of around 800 men, women and children living at the ranch.

"Um. Um, um," Clarence said, helping himself to a second helping of turkey, "I'd forgot-

ten how good that tasted.”

“Ron, who was on his third helping of turkey and seconding helping of prime rib, agreed, “Yes sir, Clarence,” he said between mouthfuls, “I haven’t eaten this good in years.”

“It’s a good thing, too,” Gary added, “Or, you’d have a 50” waist and be as round as you are tall.”

“Lighten up Gary,” Clarence admonished, “It’s Thanksgiving.”

“Oh, ok Clarence,” Gary laughed, “Just don’t pass Ron any more food.”

In the heart of the Ozarks, the President, a Democrat, wasn’t enjoying his Thanksgiving one bit. On the day before the Israelis had hiked the price of oil another \$4 a barrel. The President was a bit of a redneck, a fact well concealed from the public, indeed from the other members of his own party. Some insiders had suggested that the Arkansas raised President’s father had even been a member of the KKK.

The thing was, the President of all the people didn’t much care for Jews. He shook hands and smiled and made nice, but down deep inside, he had an irrational dislike of Jewish people in general and practically a hatred of the Israelis. Maybe he was a red-necked liberal.

The President had convened a meeting of his closest advisors and they were discussing the looming oil crisis. The US had returned to Isolationism and sealed its borders. They had enough on their plate without this oil crunch waiting to happen. The Israelis had sucked old Dubya in, selling the US oil at greatly reduced prices.

Then, citing increased production costs, they’d raised the price of oil \$1 a barrel. Soon, it was up another \$1 a barrel and in no time at all, the Israelis had raised the price right back to the former high price of 5 years before. The price increases had cost the Republican candidate the election in 2008, a fact not lost on the President on Thanksgiving of 2009. In office barely 10 months, the President felt that he had to do something to stop the highway robbery of the Israelis.

“Did Gary ever tell you the Gopher snake story Clarence?” Ron asked.

“Can’t say as he did Ron,” Clarence replied. “Gary why don’t you tell me the story?”

“Well, I’d rather not,” Gary replied, “Some people might misinterpret the story as having racial overtones.”

“What do you mean?” Clarence asked.

“Well, the story is about a joke we played on our squadron clerk, Clarence Dukes back in 1962 or 1963 at Edwards AFB,” Gary replied. “Clarence was black.”

"No biggie," Clarence said, "Come on, tell me the story."

"Dukes was one hell of a squadron clerk," Gary began. "The man could type 80 words a minute and he was one of the most organized human beings I ever met. Hell, you could set your watch by him and he did the same things day in and day out without fail."

"It happened when we were still in the 3-story barracks next to the AP barracks," Gary continued. "We rode school busses from the main base to the Rocket Site. It was a long, slow and hot ride. Some of the guys didn't care for the ride and occasionally would car pool to the Rocket Site from the main base."

"Anyway, one evening we were sitting out in front of the barracks after chow drinking a beer. Three of the fellas pulled in and parked right in front. One of them went to the trunk and took out what later proved to be a dead Gopher snake. He held it behind the head and wiggled the body and scared the crap out of us until we realized that it was just a dead Gopher snake."

"About that time," Gary continued, "Dukes came strolling out of the chow hall about ½ block away. Someone noticed and said, 'Dukes is scared to death of snakes, let's have some fun.' Anyway they threw the snake on the ground and one of the guys threw his shirt over it. Dukes came strolling along and everyone greeted him like nothing was going on."

"Now remember that I said that Dukes was a creature of habit? Every night he came back to the barracks, showered, changed into his civilian clothes and came down to the first floor vending machine room and bought a candy bar; same bar, every night. He had done it so much that he threw in the dime, yanked the lever and grabbed the candy bar, all without looking."

"Let me guess," Clarence said.

"Anyway," Gary cut him off, "We coiled that dead Gopher snake up in the tray of the candy machine right where the bar always fell. About 30 minutes later, Dukes came bopping down the stairs, he transistor radio in his left hand held to his ear and a dime in his right hand. He walked up to the candy machine, dropped in the dime, yanked the lever and..."

"Grabbed the snake," Clarence was laughing so hard tears were pouring from his eyes.

"Right on partner," Gary said, "Anyway, we hear this blood curdling scream and a blanched out Dukes comes rushing by headed back upstairs 3 steps at a time. One of the guys, Scarborough, I think, started to yell after him saying, *Hey Dukes. Relax man, it was just a Gopher snake.* Somewhere between the second and third floor, Dukes had stopped. Pretty soon he responded to Rich. *Yeah man, that was a Gopher snake all right. Go-fer yer arm, go-fer yer leg.*"

Ron had heard the story any number of times and even he was laughing. Clarence couldn't talk, so hard was he laughing. The tears were running a steady stream from his eyes. When things had finally settled down a little Ron said, "Go ahead, and tell him about the Mojave Green."

"Which one?" Gary asked.

"The one at the firing range," Ron prompted.

Ok," Gary said. "Same time frame, same place. The firing range at Edwards was west of the main base and south of the road to Rosamond. The Air Police kept a man stationed there all of the time because of all the M-1 carbines stored, I guess. Anyway, this intellectually challenged Air Policeman had caught a Mojave Green rattlesnake. It wasn't very big, from what I heard, maybe a 2 footer. He had it in a deep cardboard box sitting next to his desk in the Armory.

"He was sitting at his desk talking to a friend back at AP headquarters telling the other guy about the snake. The guy on the phone was telling him to get rid of the snake; those Mojave Greens were dang dangerous. Anyway, the jerk said, *No problem, I've got it right here in a box*, and he looked at the box. Anyway the lid to the box was open and he leaned over to peek into the box. The snake was gone. He says to his buddy, *Oh my God, the snake is gone*. About that time, he placed both of his feet flat on the floor to push back his chair and beat a swift retreat. That little snake was coiled up right between his feet and it struck, biting him on the leg."

Gary paused to catch his breath. "So anyway, the guy jerked back so hard that he tipped his chair over backwards and fell on the floor. He could see the screen door to the Armory and he either got on his feet to walk to the door or crawled, I don't remember anymore. The snake also saw the light and headed for the door at the same time.

"Understand, he'd dropped the phone and his friend is listening to all of this. So, about halfway to the door, the guy and the snake have a second encounter and the snake bites him a second time. The guy screams again and goes back to the desk. He grabs the phone and tells his friend, *Send help quick, I've just been bitten twice by the Mojave Green*. The friend had already alerted the dispatcher and one of those AP pickups was on the way. The two Air Policemen rushed in, grabbed the guy and threw him in the bed of their pickup. It was only 4 miles to the base hospital and they had plenty of antivenin so the guy survived."

"Whatever happened to the snake?" Clarence asked.

"Nobody knows, Gary said, "It probably crawled off to die from biting the Air Policeman."

[The first story is true, I helped put the snake in the candy machine tray. The other story made the rounds at Edwards for a long time, but I only know it as a rumor. – TOM]

"We got a message from the Arizona National Guard," Ron said, sobering the hysterical group.

"What do they want?" Gary asked.

"Just want to congratulate us for helping out the people in Flagstaff and Holbrook," Ron said.

"Tell them thanks, but no thanks," Gary said.

"Too late partner, they'll be here tomorrow," Ron said gravely.

"TOMORROW?" Gary yelled. "Crap, crap, crap!"

"Screw them," Ron said, "I'm going to ask the guy for a requisition for more 40mm grenades."

"You would," Gary said dejectedly.

The Commanding General of the Arizona National Guard arrived at 10 am. He noticed the Mark-19's but didn't say anything. He'd heard about the missing Buffalo Soldier Statute, well it wasn't missing any more. Again, he said nothing. He was pretty impressed with the facility and then, when he was shown the bomb shelters underneath Ron and Gary's homes he was agape.

He, his driver and his aide were invited to lunch and accepted. Over lunch Ron Gary and Clarence recounted all the adventures that had occurred during the past 5 years since the Holocaust. They spared nothing, readily telling about their adventure to rescue the Buffalo Soldier Statute.

The General must have figured they deserved something for all they had done to help their fellow Arizona citizens; he never said a word about the Statute or the Mark-19's. Just as he was about to depart, Ron approached him. He had a requisition form filed out for 40mm grenades for their Mark-19's, M-203's for their M16A2's and 40mm grenades for the M-203's. The General looked at the requisition and marveled at the brass of the man. He then had his aide sign the form and countersigned it. "In for a penny, in for a pound," he thought.

They left for Phoenix the next day, picked up the Marine Corp trucks that were still sitting where they had dumped them and headed to Barstow. When they arrived, Derek, who had now promoted himself to Bird Colonel for the trip, apologized for keeping the vehicles for so long and handed over the requisition. Because the General hadn't made a stink about the first shipment, the civilian in charge figured it was ok.

However, the Gunny was there that day and he put in a call to the Arizona National Guard to verify the requisition. He talked to the General's aide who confirmed he had signed the document but Gunny insisted that he be allowed to speak to the General. The General got on the phone and politely, but firmly, told the Gunny to just issue the ordinance and weapons on his authority.

The Gunny was set to retire in a few weeks and he wasn't going to mess up his retirement by pushing too hard. He gave the General a, "Sir, Yes Sir," and filled the order. He asked Colonel Olsen where he was from. "Ever heard of *The Res*, Gunny?" Derek had replied.

A few weeks later, Gunnery Sergeant Eldon "Skip" Scott and his wife showed up at *The Res*. They still had a couple of empty houses, so the Gunny and his wife Lois had a new home. Gunny was put in charge of security; it only made sense, all of the equipment was Marine Corps issue anyway. He even had a good laugh when he found out that Derek had been in the Army and had only ever been an E-5 Sergeant. Derek it seems had known well to show all kinds of deference to the Gunny and had treated him with a great deal of respect. "What the hell," Gunny Scott thought, "I live here now and this place is like a fort."

The situation with the Israelis was reaching a breaking point. The President flatly refused to pay the higher oil prices the Israelis were demanding. He told that senile old Sharon exactly what he could do with his oil and hung up on the man. The Israeli Ambassador showed up the next day and the President told him that the US was formally severing diplomatic relations with Israel and that he had better be on the next El Al flight out of Dulles.

The President wasn't bluffing either. The national petroleum reserve had been doubled and quadrupled and the new Alaskan field was open. The US had mandated energy efficient, clean burning diesel engines. The population, though only halved, was driving less than a quarter of the annual miles from before the American Holocaust.

Shortly after the Gunny had arrived and taken over as security chief, some scumbags decided to take on the ranch. They came in 2's and 3's, avoiding the guards at the road mazes and approached near to the compound. They had heard all about *The Res* and its heavy defenses, but they thought that it was just a rumor. Not hardly! Gunny had added a new twist after he arrived, motion detectors he found on the Radio Shack truck.

They caused a few false alarms, but the residents had come up with some 3rd generation night optics from somewhere and it only took a radio call for a tower guard to identify the source of the movement. This night, the tower guard hadn't given the expected "All Clear." This night the tower guard pressed the button that activated the submarine dive klaxons. The klaxons, where on earth had they found those, made the damnest sound you've ever heard and were almost guaranteed to wake the dead.

When they went off, the intruders tried to make a hasty retreat. Good plan; they avoided

being taken out by the liberally seeded Claymore mines planted in the concertina by the Gunny and controlled from the guard towers. Instead, they fell to the fusillade of fire from the Mark-19's and Ma Deuces. The burial party needed shovels to gather the remains in the morning. The Gunny, for his part, was completely amazed. He would have sworn that some of the guys said they were in the Army and Air Force. They looked and acted like highly disciplined Marines to him.

The residents had lost count of the number of times some fools had tried to take out their compound. The ease with which they took out intruders had almost become boring. Gunny's additions of the motion detectors improved their edge, why hadn't they thought of that? The Claymore's had never been used. Gunny had insisted that they install every last one and the mines were only 15' apart all the way around their perimeter.

They could be detonated individually or in groups, it all depended on which switches were flipped. A long row of light switches activated the individual mines and the second row the groups. Gunny had even installed a key activated switch that locked the system down just in case some kid got into the command center and began to play around. The guard on duty wore the key on a chain around their neck.

Little did the residents realize that Flagstaff, Holbrook and the other attacks were nothing but training exercises. The real fight was yet to come and it would come from the most unlikely of sources. According to most lists of hate organizations, the Jewish Defense League is a hate organization.

They are sometimes more than that some people assert, actively engaging in preemptive actions. Who really knows the truth of these matters? All this reporter knows is that Sharon, perhaps just angry at the US, perhaps in a moment of senility, had contacted a radical splinter group affiliated with the JDL.

Their mission was to destroy US oil stocks thus rendering the US once again dependent upon Israel for oil. Can you believe it? Jewish Americans were going to cut their own throats, for all practical purposes, just to make the Israelis a little more money. Of course, they all had dual citizenship, so it didn't really matter. It was all a question of perspective.

But, would they really do it? It takes all kinds of people to make a world. Thirty years ago in Southeast Asia little children walked up to American soldiers and detonated hand grenades. People flew airplanes into buildings to kill other people. Muslims got on buses with explosives strapped to their bodies and blew themselves and the passengers of the bus to kingdom come.

Yes, this splinter group of the JDL would do it. After all wasn't the President of the United States of America trying to destroy their homeland? Never mind that most of them had never been to Israel, it was their homeland and they were citizens. With the same narrow view that fueled so many wars, these supermen would bring America to her knees.

They started small, these heroes, and began by bombing refineries. They moved like a pack of animals from one refinery to the next. It wasn't until the third refinery blew up that our government realized that someone was attacking the refineries. The President immediately suspected Israel and in short order that bastion of intelligence, the all seeing eye, (the CIA) made allegations at the Presidential Daily Briefing that the Mossad was behind the entire plot. No, they couldn't quite prove it yet, but they had intelligence sources that told them Israel and the Mossad was doing the dirty deed. One wonders, were these the same intelligence sources that had told them of the Weapons of Mass Destruction in Iraq?

This President wasn't about to make the mistakes that George Bush made. He wouldn't rush head long into a war with a long time ally. No Sir! Instead, he got the Secretary of Homeland Security to raise the alert status to Orange. He got the military to protect all of the refineries and oil storage facilities. By golly he'd show them who was boss! Faced with the heightened security, the JDL splinter group looked for large stores of petroleum products.

By virtue of the Holbrook power plant staying online for an extended period of time and the use of busses to transport the employees from the ranch to Holbrook, the residents of the ranch were able to accumulate most of the 96,000 gallon monthly allotment of diesel fuel. In fact, their reserves were going up 95,000 gallons a month. By early June, they had over 2.25 million gallons of diesel fuel on hand. So large was their fuel supply, they had fuel stored in tankers, underground tanks, rail cars, you name it. They began to run the generators from time to time, just to use up the fuel. How does a little community out in the middle of nowhere accumulate 2.25 million gallons of diesel fuel without attracting attention? They don't.

Only in America – Chapter 14 – The Bad Apple

Things were starting to turn up missing from the storage building. At first, the gals in charge of issuing supplies thought it was just their bad memory, but when one of them went to get Gary a carton of Kools, she noticed that there were only 20 cartons left. Jim Thomas smoked Kools and she'd given him a carton the day before. She distinctly remembered that there were 23 cartons left the day before after she'd gotten Jim his cigarettes. She said something to Anne, her co-worker and Anne said she hadn't given out any Kools. That was odd, to say the least. They started to pay closer attention to the supplies after that. Every once in a while the oddest thing would come up missing. They finally went to Gunny and told him that someone appeared to be making unauthorized withdrawals from the supplies. So far, they told Gunny, it wasn't anything overly critical, but it needed to stop.

A 30-year veteran of the Corps, Gunny knew all about midnight requisitions. From time to time a supply Sergeant would sell Corp supplies to make a few extra bucks. That couldn't be the case here, he thought, there was no one in the area that wasn't living at the ranch. Gunny got Ron, Gary and Clarence together and told them what the gals from supply had told him.

From the list of supplies that the gals thought were missing, it appeared that someone was stocking their own shelter. The amount of supplies the gals had suggested was missing would stick out like a sore thumb, too, Gunny concluded. The guys told him to keep his eyes open and they went to talk to the gals at the supply building. The supply building wasn't locked because the ranch was on an honor system. They told Jennie and Anne to start locking the building whenever they were both out of the building.

"What are we going to do with this thief when we catch him or her?" Ron asked.

"I'm really po'd," Gary responded.

"I figured that partner, but I asked what we were going to do with the thief after we caught him or her, not whether you're po'd," Ron retorted. "Makes me mad too. Especially since whoever it is could have whatever they wanted just by asking."

"I'm really po'd," Gary responded a second time. "As far as I am concerned, whoever it is, is out. We'll catch whoever it is eventually and we'll get the supplies back. And as far as I am concerned they're out of here with just the clothes on their back."

"That's pretty harsh Gary," Clarence offered.

"Once a thief, always a thief," Gary answered with a note of finality.

"What if it's a member of your family?" Clarence asked.

"Clarence, don't get me started talking about situational ethics," Gary said, "That's what

they teach in law school and situational ethics are like being a little bit dead or a little bit pregnant.”

“Forget it Clarence,” Ron advised, “Whenever Gar-Bear starts talking about situational ethics, the argument is over.”

Jennie and Anne started locking the Supplies Building and the thefts stopped for a while. Then one night a tower guard thought she heard breaking glass and called Gunny on the radio to advise him of the noise. Gunny headed for the Supply Building, hoping he'd catch the thief red-handed. Gary had asked Anne to have someone install a heavy-duty safety chain and the door was half open; the thief couldn't get past the heavy-duty safety chain.

They were no better off than before and now they had a broken window. When they replaced the window, they used the glass with the wire mesh in it; there would be no more broken windows. Then, things started coming up missing again. Whoever this thief was, he or she was determined. Gunny began to suspect that it might be Anne or Jennie so he had a couple of people keeping an eye on them. The next time something came up missing, Gunny had to eat crow, the two gals had perfect alibis, courtesy of Gunny and his watchdogs.

Gunny met with the three men again. The only way to catch the thief, he said, was to keep someone inside of the storage building all night, every night, until they caught the thief. Gunny said he would set up a cot and do it himself; this thief was starting to po him too.

The thefts immediately stopped as soon as Gunny started spending his nights in the storage building. The old Gunnery Sergeant was starting to get really frustrated. The answer was staring him in the face, he knew it, but he just couldn't put a finger on it. At wits end, Gunny was sitting at his desk staring off into the unknown, trying to think of who could have known that he was in the storage building. The light bulb suddenly went on. It wasn't Anne or Jennie that much was certain.

The three old men were either the best actors in the world or it wasn't them. It had to be someone who could see the entrance to the supply building. With the houses packed like sardines in a tin, the only people who could see the entrance were the people in the towers. It had to be a guard. He pulled out the guard schedules and marked the dates when the thefts had apparently occurred. That narrowed his suspects to two people.

“Gentlemen, I hate to tell you this, but I have it narrowed down to one of two people, both of them tower guards,” Gunny said.

“Well hell Gunny, most everyone takes a turn at guard duty,” Ron said, “How can you narrow it down to two people?”

“I'm not talking about the part time guards Ron, these two are regular, full-time guards,”

Gunny said.

“Look, it occurred to me that the four of us were the only people who knew I was staying in the Supply Building,” Gunny said. “I had already eliminated Jennie and Anne, so that meant that either it was me, one of you three or someone who could see me going into the supply building after dark. There is only one guard tower with a clear view of the door to the Supply Building. I checked the schedules, it has to be one of these two people.”

“Or both of them,” Clarence suggested. “You have the name of one man and one woman; both of them are people who moved in from Holbrook after we quit being so fussy about who we let in.”

“I knew it,” Gary said, “We shouldn’t have stopped clearing people before we let them in.”

“It was your idea, as I recall,” Ron said.

“Then I was wrong, wasn’t I?” Gary replied.

“You sure were Gar-Bear,” Ron said, rubbing it in.

“Well, what are we going to do about it?” Gary demanded to deflect his feelings.

“I was just giving you a heads up, fellas,” Gunny said, “Leave it to me.”

Gunny made himself a comfortable roost between two houses with a clear view of the Supply Building door. Over the next two weeks, he sat up every night either one of his suspects were on duty on the 6pm to 10pm shift at the only tower with a view of the Supply Building door. He had his proof and he went back to the old men.

“Clarence, you were right,” Gunny confirmed, “It was both of them. He’s a married man and it turns out they were having a fling. Near as I can tell, they were planning on bugging out. I found the supplies they’ve been stealing, too. They were hiding them on top of the house next to mine. You know, the empty one.”

“Personally I don’t care who is sleeping with whom,” Gary said, “But the stealing part is inexcusable. They could have asked.”

“I’m with you partner,” Ron said, “The good Lord knows you and I have some accounting to do for our womanizing. But the stealing is unacceptable.”

“What are we going to do?” Clarence asked.

“Like I said,” Gary replied, “They’re out.”

“I told you Clarence,” Ron said, “Back when he got to talking about situational ethics. The man has his mind made up. And I happen to agree with him.”

“My, my,” Clarence said shaking his head.

At 8 am the following morning the diving klaxon went off. Everyone rushed to his or her assigned place. When the klaxon stopped bleating, Gunny started speaking through a loud speaker. “Ladies and gentlemen, *The Res* has a problem. We have a thief. To be exact, we have two thieves. All of you know that these compounds are built on private property. The owners of the property have decreed that the thieves shall be evicted from this property with only the clothes on their backs. Anyone who objects is free to join the thieves.”

Gary stepped up and took the microphone. “There is no reason to steal. No one had ever been denied anything. Sally Jenkins and Ron Coleman please come forward.”

The two people slowly walked to where Gunny and Gary were standing.

“You two people make me sick,” Gary said. “We took you in and gave you the run of the place. I don’t give a red rat’s hind end who sleeps with whom. But stealing is unforgivable. Give Gunny your guns and get the hell off my property.”

Afterwards Coleman’s wife came up to the three men and thanked them. “I knew he was running around on me, but I couldn’t catch him. You know, her looks are going to go one of these days and, if they live that long, he’ll start looking again.”

“Well I’ll be danged,” Clarence said.

“Probably,” Ron laughed.

The JDL splinter group was a splinter group because they didn’t uphold the principles of the organization. This small group of men and women felt they had a higher calling. They weren’t satisfied to fight back as called for in the principles of the organization. They wanted to unilaterally strike out. When the call came from Sharon, at least it was said to have come from Sharon, the men and women were willing to strike in the name of Israel. The splinter group was no different than any other of the terrorists that had existed throughout American history. Every barrel had its bad apple.

[Authors Note: If I’m going to mention an organization, I owe it to them to give them equal time. I copied the Summary of their Five Principles from the organization’s website. I express NO views on the subject. – TOM]

The sources for the philosophy and actions of the Jewish Defense League are Jewish sources. They stem from the wellsprings of Jewish tradition and have their roots in Jewish teachings. In the Bible, in the Talmud, in the teachings of our rabbis throughout the ages, in Jewish practice throughout history, the concepts of Ahavat Yisroel and Hadar

Yisroel and the practices of Barzel Yisroel, Mishmaat Yisroel and Bitachon Yisroel are hallowed. At the same time, an eternal debt is owed to Jews of our age who also recognized that these concepts are indeed Jewish and who fought an assimilated Jewish tide to put them into practice. We refer to the great Zev Jabotinsky, his followers and his movement of which we consider ourselves a spiritual part. And sitting in Heaven righteously alongside Jabotinsky is the founder and forever spiritual leader of the Jewish Defense League, Rabbi Meir Kahane. May the Almighty grant us the understanding to recognize and act on our problems forthrightly and the courage to go out to battle against our enemies in the face of all obstacles -- from within and without.

[Source: JDL dot org]

The splinter group turned away from the refineries when the President ordered the military to guard the installations. They had killed no one and they didn't intend to start. Their next target was fuel storage installations but the President had ordered them guarded, too. Their next target was pumping oil wells. They started in California, and then moved to Oklahoma and Texas. They again drew the attention of the government and soon military patrols flooded California, Texas and Oklahoma.

They headed to Pennsylvania, but they were too late. Disheartened that they were being blocked at every turn, the group headed west. Along the way, they heard about *The Res* and the vast stock of diesel fuel the small community had accumulated. They heard from another source that *The Res* was located southwest of Holbrook, Arizona. Surely the destruction of such a large storehouse of petroleum products would force the government to capitulate.

The group arrived in Holbrook late one night. The town was deserted. They spied twenty tanker cars on a siding and placed explosive charges on the railcars. They were well out of Holbrook and had stopped for the night when the explosives went off. Down at the ranch, a tower guard saw the fireball and hit the klaxon. The ranchers poured from their homes and ran to their posts. They could see the fire burning from 20 miles away. Ron, Gary and Clarence turned out too, but they didn't move as fast as the others.

"Is that Holbrook?" Ron asked.

"It looks like it to me," Gary replied. "I'll bet dollars to donuts that that's our oil supply that just went up."

"Darn, Ron said, "We had 20 railcars of diesel up there." (480,000 gallons)

"Yep," Gary said, "I'd say we just lost about 20% of our supply of diesel. We'd better get some guards over on those tankers; we can't afford to lose any more fuel. That was five deliveries of fuel."

"Jeez," Gunny said running up, "Was that our diesel fuel up in Holbrook?"

"We were just talking about that Gunny. I'd say we just lost almost a half million gallons

of fuel,” Gary replied shaking his head.

“Why in God’s name would that fuel blow up?” Gunny asked. “It was properly stored, the railcars vent valves were just cleaned last week and we had extra ground straps on all of the cars.”

“There’s nothing we can do tonight about it,” Gary said, resigned to their loss, “But we’d better mount additional guards on those tankers. Those 120 tankers are all that’s standing between us and not having any fuel except the 58,000 gallons inside the compound.”

“Do you suppose that this has anything to do with the attacks on those refineries, oil storage depots and oil fields?” Clarence asked.

“Who knows?” Gary said, his anger beginning to rise, “But I want those two Hummers with the Ma Deuces circling those tankers all night and post some extra guards Gunny. Anybody who tries to take out those tankers dies, do you understand? I don’t give a flip who they are.”

“Got it,” Gunny replied.

The klaxons could be heard for miles under certain conditions. This night, the sound carried well on the wind and the bombers heard them faintly off to the southwest further down 377. Alerted, the group moved further off the road. The next morning Gunny, Ron, Gary, Clarence and several others drove to Holbrook to inspect the damage. The fires had almost extinguished themselves and they were able to get close enough to the wreckage for Gunny to determine that the tankers had been bombed. The tortured and twisted metal was too hot to touch and the siding was a total loss.

“We’ll come back in a few days when this mess has cooled off and clean it up,” Gunny advised.

“From what you’re seeing, there’s no doubt that the cars were bombed?” Gary asked.

“None,” Gunny said pointing to some of the wreckage. “You wouldn’t get that kind of damage if the cars caught fire and blew up.”

“It’s such a waste,” Clarence said.

“We’d best beat feet back to *The Res*,” Gunny said, “If whoever did this knows about us, we’re in for trouble.”

The little group of bombers had awakened and returned to 377. They hadn’t gone very far when they spotted the barrier on the road ahead. They pulled up short and quickly moved their vehicles well off the road to the west. One of them climbed a small hill and scanned the horizon with a pair of high-powered binoculars. She could see the com-

pound about six miles south. It looked like they had a whole fleet of fuel tanker trucks. The people talked about it and decided to hike the rest of the way. They shouldered their packs and set out.

Meanwhile Gunny and the others were headed back to the ranch. When they arrived, everyone who could use a firearm was assigned to guard duty. They intended to maintain a continuous alert, everyone pulling 4 on and 8 off. Most of the guards were assigned to protect the 120 tankers. In a surprising move, the three old geezers saddled up their horses, strapped on their hog legs, stuck their carbines in the scabbards and rode off to the northeast. They hadn't said a word to anyone. Gunny, surprised by their action, took a few minutes to react. He dispatched a Humvee with Damon driving and Derek as gunner to keep an eye on the Crusty Old Curmudgeons.

"I still think you're crazy," Ron said to Gary.

"Look at us," Gary replied, "Just three old retired ranchers out for a ride. Hell, anyone we come up against will be so busy laughing we'll get the drop on them."

"Gar-Bear," Ron said, "You've seen too many movies."

"Maybe," Gary acknowledged, "But at least I know to slip the thong off the hammer of my Vaquero."

Ron muttered, "Yeah, yeah," and freed his revolver in its holster. Clarence didn't say a word, but his right hand moved to his holster and slipped the thong off his Colt SAA. They had ridden maybe 3½ miles when they came up on a group of men and women hiking in their direction.

"What do you make of that?" Ron asked.

"I have no idea," Gary said looking over his shoulder to make sure the Humvee was still behind them.

They rode up to the group. "Who are you people and what are you doing on my ranch?" Gary bluffed.

"We're just out hiking," one of the men answered.

"Yeah, right," Gary retorted "And brown cows give chocolate milk. Ain't been anybody out hiking since the Holocaust."

Gary's remark, especially his use of the term *Holocaust* caused the one armed member of the group, a real hot head, to pull his Browning Hi-Power. Gary and Ron both saw the move and they cleared leather like they were Wyatt Earp and Bat Masterson. They both fired and the man went down, a bullet in each shoulder. Hearing the gunfire and seeing the move, Damon roared up in the Humvee and Derek pointed the Ma Deuce at the

group. They slowly raised their hands.

“Damon check those packs,” Gary instructed.

Damon got out of the Humvee and roughly jerked the packs off the men and women.

“Dad, they’re full of explosives,” Damon quickly reported.

“Well, get some of those cable ties and cinch them up,” Gary said, playing the cowboy bit to the bitter end. “Put the packs and the hero in the Hummer and radio Gunny to send out the other Humvee.”

“I thought you said to kill anyone who tried to attack us,” Clarence said.

“I did,” Gary replied, “But they didn’t attack us, now did they?”

“Your bark is still worse than your bite,” Ron cracked.

“Tell that to the guy with the bullet holes,” Gary snapped.

They marched the eleven men and women all the way to the camp. It’s hard enough walking across uneven desert chaparral, but with your hands tied behind your back, it’s positively murder. It took them 3 hours to make the trek. By the time they arrived back at the ranch, the doctor had operated on the wounded man and he was starting to come out of the anesthesia. Gary checked in on the man.

“Don’t give him any pain medication Doc,” Gary instructed. “SOB pulled a gun on us.”

Doctor Robinson ignored Gary. He was a heart surgeon, not a bone specialist. He had done the best he could to repair the damage those .45 Colt slugs had done, but the man would be crippled for life. He gave the wounded man the morphine despite Gary’s instructions.

“What do you want to do with this bunch?” Gunny asked.

“I don’t know; we don’t have a jail,” Gary responded. “Call the ANG and have them pick them up. In the meantime let them sit out in the sun and improve their tans.”

Gunny got on the radio to the ANG unit in Flagstaff. In just under two hours, they had arrived, loaded the prisoners in the back of a deuce and a half and had left for Flagstaff. The wounded man was loaded into an Army ambulance. When the ANG detachment got back to Flagstaff, they contact the Commanding General of the ANG.

He, in turn, contacted his superiors and a few hours later a military 727 arrived in Flagstaff carrying FBI agents. The agents transported the dozen terrorists back East and began to interrogate them. The people were proud of what they’d accomplished, as it

was for Israel, and weren't the least bit shy in taking credit for their actions.

The next day, during the President's Daily Briefing, the Director of the FBI shared the results of the interrogations with the President.

"Get some of those bunker buster bombs on board a carrier and get it headed toward the Middle East," the President instructed.

"But Mr. President, only the F-15E Strike Eagles are configured to carry the GBU-28 bombs," an aide protested.

"Those modified F-14's have the Lantirn system so get those Navy guys to modify the F-14 to carry the bunker buster," the President insisted.

The President was the Commander in Chief and 72 hours later a carrier battle group left American shores for the first time in over 3 years. The President waited until the battle group had reached the Mediterranean before he issued his final orders.

Dimona is in the Negev desert. The United States first became aware of Dimona's existence after U-2 overflights in 1958 captured the facility's construction, but it was not identified as a nuclear site until two years later. The complex was variously explained as a textile plant, an agricultural station, and a metallurgical research facility, until David Ben-Gurion stated in December 1960 that Dimona complex was a nuclear research center built for "peaceful purposes."

There followed two decades in which the United States, through a combination of benign neglect, erroneous analysis, and successful Israeli deception, failed to discern the details of Israel's nuclear program. As early as 8 December 1960, the CIA issued a report outlining Dimona's implications for nuclear proliferation, and the CIA station in Tel Aviv had determined by the mid-1960s that the Israeli nuclear weapons program was an established and irreversible fact.

By the late 1990s the US Intelligence Community estimated that Israel possessed between 75-130 weapons, based on production estimates. The stockpile would certainly include warheads for mobile Jericho-1 and Jericho-2 missiles, as well as bombs for Israeli aircraft, and may include other tactical nuclear weapons of various types. Some published estimates even claimed that Israel might have as many as 400 nuclear weapons by the late 1990s.

The President had decided that Israel wouldn't be any sort of a threat if they didn't have nuclear weapons. He issued orders for an F-14 to deliver a single GBU-28 into the weapons stored at Dimona. Dimona was remote, so the collateral damage would be greatly confined.

Several of his military advisers insisted that a single, well-placed bunker buster would destroy most, if not all, of Israel's nuclear weapons. Moreover, there was virtually no

danger of the nukes going nuclear when they exploded. There would be some radioactive material released but they assured him that all of it would be trapped underground. Since the US had reduced the Middle East to a cinder several years before, the Israelis had no use for the nuclear weapons anyway, the President reasoned.

The Israelis are no slouches when it comes to air defense. However the American action caught them off guard. They were able to scramble their fighters to meet the threat, but the F/A-18's and F-14's deployed with the 2 F-14's carrying the GBU-28's were able to hold the Israeli Air Defenses at bay and the GBU-28s were delivered on target. It had taken America years to locate the underground bunker, but they were dead on target. The bombs and the warheads for Jericho missiles exploded in a chain reaction to the bursting bunker buster. The US had no damage assessment, but whatever weapons the Israelis had stored at Dimona had been destroyed.

The unfortunate side effect of the JDL splinter group's efforts was that it forced the American military to discontinue its campaign to round up the roving gangs that so plagued America. Given a breather, the gangs regrouped and reformed into larger, more powerful organizations. They began attacking the settlements, wiping out the communities to the last person and stealing their carefully hoarded stores.

The largest of these groups headquartered itself in Denver. The group drew its members from as far away as Chicago, Los Angeles and New York City. These were the toughest of the tough; the survivors of numerous battles and the Sarin and the virus. They gave no quarter and asked for none. They were savages in a savage land.

After the loss of their diesel stores in Holbrook, the ranchers cleaned up the mess in Holbrook, re-laid the siding and commenced to improve the security of their tanker fleet. Previously protected only by a barbed wire fence, they upgraded the protection to a 10' high, 3' thick slip form constructed walled in compound. They made the compound large enough to hold 200 double-bottomed trailers. The trailers were parked two rows deep on either side of a center road and each row could hold 25 double-bottomed trailers. The compound was 200' wide and 300' deep. The fence was topped with homemade concertina and both gates were covered by the 3/4" steel plates. They also stripped the concertina off the east and west gates of the main compound and added 3/4" plates to the outer gates.

According to CNN, a gang the size of a small army had stuck Albuquerque and killed hundreds, perhaps thousands. Army units had been pulled off refineries and oil storage complexes in Texas and Oklahoma and were fanning out to readdress the reemerging gang problem. The residents of the ranch raised their alert level a notch and dispatched a guard force to the Holbrook power plant.

Only in America – Chapter 16 – Coming to America

It was during the first week of December that Clarence appeared at Ron's front door.

"Clarence! Come in partner. Coffee?" Ron greeted his friend.

"Yes on the coffee Ron. Do you have a few minutes? I want to talk to you," Clarence responded.

"I always have time for you Clarence, what's on your mind?" Ron replied, pouring Clarence a cup of coffee and sitting down at the kitchen table.

"Gary," Clarence replied softly.

"Gary? What's he done now?" Ron inquired.

"It's not so much one thing in particular," Clarence explained, "But you'll have to admit that since the 4th of July that boy's been acting mighty strange."

"For instance?" Ron asked sitting forward on his chair.

"For instance this thing with 8' thick walls and enough weapons and ammo to fight World War III," Clarence replied.

"I'll admit that Gary is sometimes a little paranoid," Ron allowed, "But his preparations have saved our butts more times than I can count. Just because you're paranoid doesn't mean they're not out to get you."

"Maybe so Ron," Clarence smiled at the old expression, "But it's starting to get to people here at *The Res*."

"In what way?" Ron asked.

"You mean to tell me that you didn't hear some of the comments that were going around last Thursday?" Clarence huffed.

"Yes, I heard them, but so what?" Ron rebuffed Clarence. "People have been talking about leaving this place for as long as I can remember. Even Gary's and my kids went through that phase."

"Ok, but how many of them actually followed through with it?" Clarence challenged.

"None, why?" Ron reacted, interested.

"Well partner, you've got a whole new think coming," Clarence said, "There's four families packing to leave and return to Holbrook right this minute."

“Really?” Ron asked. “Maybe I’d better go have a talk with them.”

“I already did,” Clarence said. “They say with the gang problem under control it’s perfectly safe to move back to Holbrook. I think it runs deeper than that. I think that good old Gary has driven them out.”

“I’ll talk to them anyway,” Ron suggested. “I’ll make sure they have enough supplies and see if I can’t get to the real reason why they’re leaving.”

Ron got up to go talk with the people. Clarence wasn’t convinced that it would do any good and he shook his head and went back home. Ron had the innate ability to get people to say things to him that they wouldn’t say to another living human being. He visited with the folks; even helped them load some of their things on one of the 5-ton trucks they were borrowing to move to Holbrook.

It turned out that Gary wasn’t the problem. Living in a community with barely 10’ between houses any direction you looked was. The people admitted that living at *The Res* was a bit claustrophobic. There were no hard feelings at all. Ron made certain that the people knew that they were welcome back; provided their home wasn’t occupied by someone else and there was no space available.

Gary came out of his home just as the last truck was pulling out of the compound. He walked up to Ron.

“Where are they going?” Gary asked.

“They’re moving back to Holbrook,” Ron answered.

“Why? Something wrong with living here at *The Res*?” Gary asked.

“Maybe they’re a little claustrophobic,” Ron said, “But no, not really.”

“Did you make sure to tell them that they were welcome back?” Gary asked, concerned.

“Sure did partner,” Ron smiled.

“You know we talked about building the homes so close together way back when we started building the slip form homes,” Gary reminded Ron. “The consensus was, unless my memory is completely shot, that the trade off was worth it.”

“There’s nothing wrong with your memory partner,” Ron laughed. “How about we get Clarence and hit the range for a couple of hours?”

“Hey great,” Gary replied, “I’ve been dying to try out that Tac-50 that the General gave me as a going away present.”

“You mean that you haven’t had it to the range yet?” Ron looked at Gary. “Hell, you’ve had the rifle since August.”

“I know, but I don’t get out so much anymore,” Gary said.

“Have you even inspected the compound since they completed all of the work three weeks ago?” Ron inquired.

“I’ve been meaning to,” Gary answered, “But honestly, no. That battle with the Gangster’s took something out of me.”

“I’d noticed that you hadn’t been around much lately,” Ron said, “I just assumed that you had a touch of the flu or something.”

“It’s more like, or something,” Gary admitted.

“Just what is bothering you partner?” Ron asked.

“I wish I knew,” Gary said. “I just have this nagging feeling in my gut that all is not right in the world.”

“If you’re worried then I’m worried,” Ron said, “Your instincts seem to be pretty good. I just wish you knew what was bothering you then I’d know what I was worried about. Come on, let’s do the tour and then get to the range.”

They toured the inside of the compounds and the outside. Gary said if they’d just been thinking, they could have connected the corners of the vehicle compound to the main compound and created some additional secure storage. Ron said that they were used to tearing things down, he’d have a talk with the two Jim’s and see what they thought.

All they would be out, he said was the labor and some concrete. Gary told him to go ahead, but make it a low priority. The new guard towers looked like they could take a direct hit from about anything, Gary said. The reason that he’d opted to go to 8’ walls instead of 7’ walls was that Derek thought the extra foot might just be the edge they needed if someone started shelling the place with tanks.

Ron didn’t think that was likely to happen and he told Gary so. They went back inside of the compound, got their rifles, picked up Clarence and headed for the range. Gary laid the big McMillan rifle on the table they set up at 500-meters and got back into the pickup. He wanted to practice his fast draw some more. He burned through a box of the .45 Colt cartridges before he was convinced that it was no fluke, he could clear leather pretty good for an old man.

They went back to the table at the 500-meter marker and proceeded to fine tune the zero on the Tac-50. When Gary was satisfied that he was shooting about as well as he

had a right to expect, they moved back to the 1,000-meter marker and fired some more rounds. All three men took turns at 500-meters and 1,000-meters. They weren't putting all of the rounds in the X ring, but every round hit the silhouette at both distances. Gary said he was going to suggest a shooting contest and the best shot would win the rifle. While Gary was playing Wyatt Earp, Ron took Clarence aside and filled him in on his conversations with the people who had left earlier that day. If Ron was satisfied, then it was ok with Clarence.

The Chinese Army had been steadily increasing because the government offered men a better shot at eating than growing their own food did. The government seized most of the food anyway to feed the Army. The Chinese Navy hadn't grown particularly large; the Chinese were concentrating on their space program, missiles and ground forces. Besides, they reasoned, the US Navy was still the mightiest Navy in the World, even if the ships rarely left port. Rarely was perhaps too strong a term, in reality the US Strike Groups made 2 month-long training sorties every year and they did their very best to maintain their edge.

Every ship available was moving the Chinese Army the short distance from Manchuria to Alaska. They swiftly overran the small contingent of American forces stationed in Alaska and the mainland US Army and Air Force lost communications with their northern forces. The aging equipment was prone to failures, especially during the winters and the Army and Air Force kept blindly trying to reestablish communications.

During the winter of 2009-2010, communications had been out for 2 months and they had rushed to Alaska only to find the troops warm and content. They weren't in so much of a rush in the winter of 2010-2011 to travel to Alaska again because of the communications breakdown. The new equipment they ordered to resolve the communications problem wasn't due to be delivered until May of 2011 anyway.

It wasn't until the Chinese had moved their entire invasion force and all of their equipment that the Americans even had a clue that something extraordinary was happening. With their troops in place, the Chinese shut down the new Trans-Canadian pipeline. When the oil stopped flowing, the Americans sat up and took notice.

They re-tasked their few remaining spy satellites and observed a force some estimated to be as large as 3 million soldiers trudging to the south, taking out the small Canadian resistance as it moved. In light of the World's reaction to his predecessor's use of nuclear weapons against Saudi Arabia, this President wanted to avoid the nuclear option. Besides, who knew what the Chinese had done in the intervening years. For all he knew, they had more missiles than the US.

Despite what many people think, the US does not maintain an inexhaustible supply of munitions. Whenever it has gone to war, the first thing the US had to do was get the Military Industrial Complex up to speed. This took more than a few days, especially in a county that had lost 55% of its population following Thanksgiving, 2004. And, one could usually tell when the government was planning on war because the matériel buildup

preceded the conflict. Besides, 3 million soldiers is a lot of soldiers to kill using convention munitions.

The policy of Isolationism hadn't set well with many of the European countries and when the US pulled out of NATO and refused to join a reestablished United Nations, none of the European countries, save Great Britain, was eager to help the Americans. The British Parliament was debating the issue and was divided. If they were going to help anyone, it would be the Canadians, not the Americans.

Gary, Ron and Clarence sat as if glued to the TV. CNN had announced the sources inside the White House had revealed that the Chinese had invaded Alaska, were moving through central Canada and approaching the northern US in what the source described as a blow clearly aimed at America's heartland.

"I knew something was up," Gary said, "I felt it in my gut."

"I remember you saying that partner, it wasn't all that long ago," Ron confirmed.

"First week of December I think Ron," Gary responded, "I seem to remember warning a year ago that the Chinese were starving, too."

"That announcer says that we're bombing them. Do you think we can stop them?" Clarence asked.

"If we don't run out of bombs first, maybe," Gary said, "But I've studied the question from time to time. The US gets all these great plans for new weapons systems and never follows through or the system doesn't meet expectations. There was that Sgt. York thing, the Crusader and the Navy's A-12. Billions on development and they never made it past testing. Never mind how many munitions they had to give up to pay for those boondoggles."

"I never knew that," Clarence said.

"I wish the Internet were still up," Gary exclaimed, "I used to spend hours at a website, globalsecurity dot org. If you really dug, you could find out a lot. Let me give you a for instance. During the first Gulf war, the Corps favored a Cluster bomb called the CBU-99. They dropped over 15 thousand of the things. Our total inventory was between 27 and 28 thousand. And when I looked at all the bombs and stuff, I was shocked to learn how many were special purpose and how many we had small inventories of. We could get down to dropping rocks on those Chinese before they even get to the US."

"Gar-Bear, I don't think the Chinese will ever make it to the US," Ron asserted, "And if they do, there would be no reason for them to come to northern Arizona."

"I agree with the last part Ron," Gary nodded, "But I'd bet they make it to the US all right."

The Chinese had made landfall in the general area of Shaktoolik, Alaska. It was winter and the snow was hampering their movements. Every meter forward came at an expense of heartbreaking labor. They persevered, however, and eventually worked their way to highway 3 southwest of Fairbanks. From that point on their journey became relatively easier by a factor of ten. They followed highway 2, crossing into Canada in the Yukon Territory where the highway became number 1. They continued to follow highway 1, dipping briefly into British Columbia before the road turned back north.

Massive graders cleared their way, but the going was slow. At Watson Lake, they came to highway 97 and followed it to Dawson Creek where they picked up highway 2. So strung out were they that their convoy stretched all the way back to Alaska. As the first elements were about to enter Alberta, the rear elements were still in the Yukon.

They came to a halt to allow the many, many miles of vehicles to catch up. They were packed 30 or more to a truck. But the upside was that gave them the teeniest bit of warmth. The forced march from the Alaskan shore to eastern British Columbia was not made without losses. The cold, the dangerous travel conditions and later the slippery roads claimed upwards of ½ million of the Chinese invading forces.

It was in the Dawson Creek area that the RCMP and the Canadian Army discovered them. The Canadian forces did their very best, but they were no match for the steadily increasing force as the Chinese force continued to stream in and form up. The Chinese had to forego the luxury of air support, but they had a huge number of surface-to-air MANPADs.

Over time they inflicted heavy losses on the Canadians. With their air forces being reduced on a daily basis, the Canadians were eventually forced to discontinue the air assault and their army forced to withdraw to regroup. The American President had been contacted early on and he sortied the Pacific Fleet out of San Diego and Bremerton and other ports, but the Americans couldn't reach far enough east to attack the main body without in-flight refueling.

This presented a tremendous problem for the Americans because they had to fly long refueling flights and some of the older KC-135 tankers had reached the end of their useful life. Nevertheless the Naval aviators sent wave after wave of aircraft to bomb and strafe the Chinese and when they were finally forced to withdraw, the US Air Force picked up the air campaign.

Why, one might ask, would the Chinese attack in the middle of winter? Probably for the same reason they had attacked the Chosin Reservoir during the winter during the Korean War, because they perceived an advantage. What they gave up in adversity, they gained in position. They planned to move to Edmonton and from there to Saskatoon and then onto Regina and finally into North Dakota, United States of America.

They planned to hit the US in the early spring. Wave after wave of American Air Force ground attack planes pounded the Chinese in Canada, inflicting over a million casualties. Unlike the Americans, a wounded Chinese soldier didn't take two soldiers out of the battle. They left their comrades right where they fell. They were in a strange land, cold, hungry and under constant air attack. But, they had those MANPADs and the Americans finally ran short of bombs and then fuel for their planes and had to suspend their air campaign.

As American forces assembled and moved to Montana, North Dakota and Minnesota, the Chinese relentlessly pushed forward. By the time they had reached the US in late April, they were cold, tired, hungry and wet, all 1.5 million of them. They paused in their journey to regroup and service the 2,000 plus tanks that remained out of the initial 5,000 plus.

As they did so the Americans were taking up their defensive positions. The CNN broadcast had come while the Americans were taking those final positions. Later in the same broadcast, the announcer had an update. The remaining Chinese forces were estimated to number as many as 1.5 million.

"One and one half million?" Gary practically shouted. "How many troops did we have in Iraq?"

"About a quarter of a million each time," Ron answered.

"They must have as many troops as our whole military," Clarence suggested.

"Close to it, I'd bet," Gary said. "This is going to be the mother of all battles."

"Yeah, that's what Saddam said," Ron laughed. "We kicked his butt and we'll kick their butts."

The US might have been short on bombs and fuel for the jet aircraft, but they still had plenty of helicopter gunships, tanks, artillery and all manner of mean and nasty and vile weapons. The Chinese avoided consolidating their tanks and trucks and artillery in one area, making it difficult for the Americans to roll through an area with an Apache and take out 16 tanks in a single flight. They lost several hundred thousand more men to the Americans attacks, but on the first day of May 2011, they began to roll across the border into North Dakota. They met with stiffer resistance than they had anticipated.

While their tanks were supposed to be the equal of the Americans, the SEP package that all the American tanks sported made a huge difference. Their targeting was good, these Chinese, but the SEP package on the American tanks made for one-shot kills. No one, except for the Germans, had ever duplicated the rounds fired by the 120mm American tank cannons. The Chinese guns were bigger but their rounds were inefficient as compared to the Americans. Not even an American Abrams M1A2SEP could stand up to the improved TOW missile and the Chinese tanks were no exception.

They planned to fan out with the right flank moving west and the left flank moving east. An entire expanded Chinese Division successfully evaded the Americans when they fanned out, but most did not. The battle raged for about two months. The Americans simply refused to give up their territory. The Chinese would make a push and throw the Americans back.

The Americans would bring in aerial assets and counter attack. Between the American air assaults and the superior American tank munitions, the American counter attacks pushed the Chinese back. This seesaw battle, waged in a 50-mile strip on either side of the border, ebbed and flowed with the American inflicting about twenty fatalities on the Chinese for every American soldier killed. Had the Chinese devoted more resources to retrieving and treating their wounded, their casualties would have been far less.

One Chinese thrust was particularly successful, pushing the Americans back nearly 100 miles. American B-52's utilized every available 500-pound bomb in an extended period of carpet-bombing and finally broke the Chinese advance, once again allowing American infantry units to counter attack and push the Chinese back almost to the Canadian border. The Chinese quickly regrouped and attacked again.

M1A2SEP's halted that advance and the Chinese lost a higher than usual number of tanks. It became a battle of attrition and the 20 to 1 kill ratio was slowly reducing the Chinese Army's ability to continue their savage thrusts. Having regrouped, the Canadian army moved in behind the Chinese to cut off any full-scale attempt to retreat. Caught between the proverbial rock and a hard spot, the Chinese had no option except to continue to try and break through the American defenses.

The American Naval fighter and bomber forces were finally brought in from the Atlantic Fleet to supplement the US Air Force. This single decision began to turn the tide of battle in favor of the American forces. Although they had brought literally thousands of the shoulder-fired missiles, the Chinese supply was not inexhaustible.

Unable to scavenge for additional food supplies and having planned on far less American resistance, the Chinese grew hungry and their munitions stores thinned. It truly was a battle of attrition. The American President had the luxury of funneling more and more supplies to our troops. The Chinese only had what they carried with them. He also had the luxury of continuing to bring reinforcements from National Guard units.

The Chinese grew weaker; the Americans grew stronger. American industry began to deliver more bombs, rockets and munitions to the Americans. Refineries were working round the clock, drawing from the national reserves, to replace the jet fuel being consumed. The aircraft of the Pacific fleet were serviced and joined their brethren from the Atlantic fleet. The Chinese loses increased even more. The weather was greatly improved and the Americans launched a major offensive to try and finish off the remaining Chinese. It became a desperate battle for the Chinese at this point. They refused to surrender, but finally were left with no choice. They had lost 80% of their original

3,000,000-man force.

In the end, 71,500 Americans died defending American soil. About 2.4 million Chinese were either killed outright or died from the lack of medical treatment and about 450,000 Chinese were captured. That left nearly 50,000 Chinese soldiers out of the original 3 million unaccounted for. These were the troops from the right flank that had veered to the west and escaped detection by the American forces.

Those 50 thousand had moved to the southwest and made it to the eastern slope of the Rocky Mountains in the state called Colorado. They came to the nearly deserted city named Denver. They met token resistance from the remaining gangsters and cleaned them out in minutes. And they went to ground.

When the gangster's controlled Denver, they herded up the remaining survivors in the community and made them slaves. There were more bad guys than survivors in the end. It hadn't started out that way, the survivors had outnumbered the gangsters, but the survivalists had departed Denver for safer places and the remaining survivor's were the less prepared, more liberal members of the community.

The gangsters had made short work of killing of anyone brave enough to fight and had enslaved the rest. The people fled when the gangsters set out to pillage and rape and loot. They managed to slip off one night when the few dozen gangsters partied and fell into drunken stupors. Those few dozen gangsters awoke the next day to find they were alone in Denver. They managed to hang on until the Chinese showed up.

The 50,000 Chinese who made it to Denver weren't the poor starving conscripts that made up much of the invading forces. This was one of the two units charged with seizing the American heartland and then turning it over to the conscripted farmers. The other unit on the left flank hadn't made it past the Americans. This large unit was made up of regular Chinese army; they were professional soldiers.

They found large supplies of food in Denver. They even found stores of the 5.56x45mm NATO ammo they used in their weapons. Normally equipped with the QZB-95 rifle using the 5.8x42mm DBP87 round, they were issued QBZ-97A firing the 5.56x45mm NATO cartridge. And, they were very, very careful. They assumed that the Americans knew of their unit and were searching for them. They were wrong. They broke out at the particular moment that the American had no Predators, no aircraft, and no infantry in the area they traveled through.

They Chinese found radios in Denver and their translators told them that American Public Radio was claiming a great victory. The Americans were reporting that, aided by their Canadian ally, they had killed or captured the entire invading force. The officers realized that they were home free. The senior officer, a newly promoted General, fancied himself to be a Warlord and he intended to make the best of a bad situation. Unlike the gangsters who had no rhyme or reason to their looting, the General had his people systematically salvage anything of value in the community. Assuming that the Americans would

eventually over fly Denver, he had his men dress in civilian clothes and remain inside most of the time.

“I told you we’d kick their butt,” Ron said to Clarence and Gary after they’d heard the post war summary on CNN.

“Almost 3 million men,” Clarence said shaking his head. “They lost almost 3 million men.”

“Yep,” Ron said, “It will probably take them a whole year to pop out 3 million replacements. Screw them Clarence, I’m much more concerned with the 71 thousand Americans and the 15 thousand Canadians who lost their lives. And the wounded, don’t forget the wounded. There were almost 300 thousand wounded. “

“I still think that the President should have nuked the crap out of them,” Gary said.

“I seem to recall that the Chinese were putting people in orbit late in 2004,” Ron commented. “Or was that the Japanese? I can’t remember. Anyway, if they could put men in orbit, they must have the capacity to build one hell of a fleet of intercontinental ballistic missiles. I think the President was wise in not launching an attack on China. Hell, we could have ended back in the shelters and I’m not so sure we could get everyone here into those shelters anymore.”

“But they did get all of the Chinese, right?” Gary asked.

“That’s what I understood the announcer to say,” Clarence responded. “Three million men...”

“Well, if any of them did get away,” Ron laughed, “We’ll have Chinese restaurants springing up all over the place.”

With the threat apparently passed, more of the former resident’s of Holbrook returned to their homes in town. The ranch wasn’t in any danger of becoming a ghost town, by any means, but the population was steadily falling. Some people moved to the town of Show Low, tired of living in the raw desert and wanting the more soothing environs of a wooded, mountain community. The sharpshooter who had won the rifle was among those who left for Show Low and Gary made sure that he retrieved his rifle from her before she and her husband and children left. He gave the rifle to Clarence. The people who remained on the ranch moved to different homes and soon every other house was empty. It felt much less crowded.

Gunny was unhappy with all of the people leaving; it made his job as head of security much harder. Vowing to continue to provide what amounted to the only law enforcement in the entire area, he formed a mobile security force and they traveled to Holbrook and to Show Low. His men assisted the relocated resident’s in establishing a rudimentary security system and equipped them with extra ammunition, radios and other necessi-

ties.

In Denver, the new Warlord had finally succeeded in stripping the town of anything useful. They had been there 4 months and hadn't been discovered. It was becoming harder to control his men, too. There wasn't a single woman in all of Denver. Well rested, their bellies full for the first time in a long time, the men clamored for companionship.

The Warlord had no choice and began to send out raiding parties. They were to take what they could find, but above all, they were to bring back any female captives. They moved out in small groups of 100 or less like a plague of locusts across the fertile plains of eastern Colorado and north into Wyoming and south into New Mexico. They found people from time to time, killing the men and capturing the women and supplies. They were undiscovered as the remnants of the invading Chinese army, but they were not unnoticed.

"Mr. President," the Director of the FBI advised him at his Daily Briefing, "It appears that we have a resurgence of gang activity in the Denver area."

"Has the military done over-flights?" the President asked.

"Yes Sir," the Director responded, "But Denver appears to be a ghost town. Even those few gangsters that we knew were in Denver seem to have disappeared."

"What would you recommend?" the President asked.

"We can send in a Battalion of Infantry from Ft. Hood, Mr. President, with armor in support," his military advisor suggested.

"A Battalion?" the President reacted, "To a ghost town? That's a waste of men and matériel. Send in two companies and forget the armor. And Ft. Hood is too far away from Denver; get some of the Arizona National Guard to make the trip."

Though he didn't know it, the President was being penny-wise and pound-foolish. The Arizona National Guard had fought bravely in North Dakota. They had taken many casualties between the dead and wounded. They had lost a high percentage of their Apache gunships, too. Besides, they had traveled through Denver on their return trip to Arizona and had seen nothing.

The Commanding General questioned his orders, but they were affirmed and the weary soldiers of the ANG loaded onto their trucks in Flagstaff and headed east on I-40 bound for Albuquerque where they would pick up I-25 to Denver. That was the last anyone ever saw of those two companies of brave men and women.

One week later at the Daily Briefing, the President inquired as to what the ANG had found in Denver. He was advised that the last communication the Army had had with the ANG was three days earlier. They were in Colorado Springs and were preparing to

enter Denver the following day. When contact was lost with the units, several over flights were made of the Denver area, but even the ANG vehicles had disappeared. At the very moment, the Battalion of Infantry and an Armored Battalion was being readied at Ft. Hood to investigate the disappearance. Something was terribly, terribly wrong.

The ANG had driven into a trap. Perhaps it was the fatigue from the long battle in North Dakota from which they were still recovering. Perhaps it was over confidence from having traveled through Denver and having not seen a single soul. Perhaps it was just that two companies of ANG had gone up against an expanded Chinese Division of crack troops. They hadn't even been able to get off a radio call before they were wiped out. Their bodies were unceremoniously dumped back on their trucks and the trucks moved to a large warehouse, out of sight. The Chinese, jubilant from their exercise, used the women captives badly that night and many of the women died from the brutal treatment.

Only in America – Chapter 17 – Chinese Anyone?

At Ft. Hood, the 1st Raider Brigade (Iron Horse), the first fully digitalized unit in the US Army, was preparing to leave for Denver. The unit, made up of the 1st Battalion, 22nd Infantry; 3rd Battalion, 66th Armor and the 1st Battalion, 66th Armor had their armor loaded aboard the transports and was ready to depart. Commanded by a Bird Colonel, the unit had performed admirably in North Dakota and had refitted and was rested enough to take on another battle. The Brigade was part of the III Corp and its sister Brigades, the 2nd (Blackjack), 3rd (Grey Wolf) and 4th (Aviation) were on alert but not loaded up.

Iron Horse was tough. They'd fought the Chinese in North Dakota and had taken losses, but not to the extent of other Brigades. In fact, the entire III Corp had been especially lucky, taking far fewer casualties than other Corps. The Corp had destroyed many of the T-98 tanks in North Dakota with their M1A2SEP units and thought this trip to Denver to take on a few gangsters was almost demeaning.

But, orders were orders, and a bullet from a gangster's rifle could kill you just as dead as a bullet from a Chinese rifle. In fact, the gangster's preferred the same rifle used by the Chinese troops. It was a long journey from Ft. Hood to Denver and traveling at convoy speeds, the units took some time to reach Denver.

Forewarned of a possible trap, the 1st Raider Brigade deployed around Denver and hunkered down to observe. Over the course of the next two weeks, it became apparent that they were greatly outnumbered and they called for the other Brigades to be brought up from Ft. Hood. No one was in a hurry to die.

With 4 Brigades assembled around Denver, the American forces made their move. They swept into Denver from the north, the east and the south. They figured with the Rocky Mountains on the west, they could use their aviation units to pick off any stragglers that fled to the west. The Chinese had gotten a little soft in the many months they had been in Denver.

They met the American onslaught, but Infantry against Armor was uneven and the Aviation Brigade was taking its toll. They fought for over a week; eventually it came down to a house-to-house urban battle for which the Americans were superbly trained. The house-to-house phase lasted a second week while the Infantry moved through the city of Denver.

A few Chinese managed to slip out to the Rockies unnoticed. Many who tried were gunned down, but of the 50,000 men in the Division, over 300 managed to evade the Americans. The Americans were weary of war and a blind eye was turned as the wounded were dispatched rather than being given medical aid. At the end of the two weeks, the 2nd, 3rd and 4th Brigades saddled up and left the 1st Brigade the unpleasant task of policing up the nearly 50,000 bodies.

They had found the ANG vehicles in a warehouse, the bodies in an advancing state of decomposition. When this had been reported, early on, to the Corp Commander the take no prisoners order had gone out. They bulldozed a large pit and dumped the bodies of the Chinese. The Chinese had killed all of the women captives when the Americans attacked. They were given proper burials and the two Companies of ANG soldiers were airlifted to Flagstaff.

Eventually the 1st Brigade finished its work and returned to Ft. Hood, another sad chapter in American history closed. But, what of the 300 who had escaped to the Rockies? Eventually collecting into a group led by a Lieutenant, the Chinese decided to go to Mexico and try and find a ship so they could return to China. They moved down the Rocky Mountain chain carefully avoiding all human contact.

They passed to the west of Colorado Springs and Pueblo and Trinidad and into New Mexico. They bypassed Santa Fe and when they reached Albuquerque, took some abandoned semi tractor-trailer rigs and headed west on I-40. They would travel to this place called Bullhead City and turn south towards Mexicali. From there, they would travel to the western coast of the Baja and find a ship, any ship, and return home.

The commander of the III Corp was called to Washington to brief the President personally. Satisfied with the commander's assurance that the remaining Chinese had been *wiped out to a man*, the President arranged for the General to give the American public a briefing on CNN ala Norman Schwarzkopf from the days of the first Gulf War. Gunny, Gary, Ron and Clarence sat glued, once again, to the TV as the General gave his briefing. Gary noticed that Gunny was squirming in his seat, but he said nothing.

"I'll be a Son-of-a-monkey," Gunny cussed.

"What's the matter Gunny?" Gary asked, "You were squirming through the whole broadcast."

"Never send a boy to do a man's job," Gunny snorted.

"What in the hell are you talking about?" Gary pressed.

"Surround a city on three sides. BS! Most cities have four sides," Gunny remarked.

They should have sent in the Marines. At least when we surround a city, we surround the whole city," Gunny remarked.

"Gunny, they had helicopter gunships covering the west side of Denver," Gary insisted. "I don't think anyone got away."

"Yeah, like those 50,000 Chinese didn't get away from North Dakota, huh?" Gunny remarked.

“Oh,” Gary said.

“I’d feel better if we put out some forward observers for the next few weeks just in case any of those Chinese did get out of Denver,” Gunny suggested.

“Why not Gary?” Clarence asked. “Better safe than sorry.”

“Ok. Go ahead,” Gary agreed. “How about a pickup every 15 miles or so south of the I-40 all the way to the New Mexico state line?”

“That’s a good idea,” Gunny admitted. “We can send 3 man or 3 women teams and they can keep watch for the next month or so.”

“What are we going to do if some Chinese do show up?” Clarence asked, playing Devil’s Advocate.

“Supposedly these were top Chinese troops,” Gunny said, “We’d best not play games with them. We can scramble our 8 Hummers out of here the minute we get word and try and cut them off before they ever get to Holbrook. We’ll mount Mark-19’s on six of them and leave the Ma Deuces on the other two. That ought to make mincemeat out of them Chinese if they do show up.”

“Those Chinese,” Gary said.

“Huh?” Gunny asked.

“I was just correcting your English Gunny,” Gary laughed, “You said them Chinese; you should have said those Chinese.”

“SOBs will be dead either way,” Gunny laughed.

The Chinese were in Trinidad, Colorado while the men back at *The Res* made their plans. They still had to travel to Santa Fe and then to Albuquerque before they commandeered the semis. The Res sent out the forward observers and each group did a week of duty before being relieved.

As the weeks wore on, everyone began to relax; everyone that is but Gunny. Gunny was a great believer in Murphy’s Law and he was convinced that if a single Chinese soldier had made it out of Denver, that soldier would show up in Holbrook driving a MLRS and shell *The Res*.

When Gary, Ron and Clarence suggested that he call off the forward observers, he insisted that they stay out for another week. The men finally gave in. When another week passed without any sign of the Chinese, the three men pushed to get Gunny to stop the exercise. Gunny held out for one more week. On the fourth day of this last week, 6 semi tractor-trailers appeared on the horizon. The forward observers radioed the news and it

was passed down the line to *The Res*.

The klaxon broke the peace of *The Res*. An over enthusiastic former Gunnery Sergeant had hit the button when the radio call came in. The resident's dropped everything and ran to their posts. Realizing that he shouldn't have hit the button, Gunny grabbed a loud speaker and told everyone to stand down, but remain on alert; they were going out for Chinese.

He jumped in the lead Humvee and told the driver to get the lead out. The Hummers headed for Holbrook at 55 mph, their top speed. They had plenty of time to get to Holbrook and set up the ambush, the warning came while the semis were 70 miles away. Even though the Chinese driver's had the semis running at 75 miles per hour, they were almost an hour east of Holbrook when they were spotted.

They were still 25 minutes east of Holbrook when the Humvees pulled into town. Gunny spaced the Humvees out along Encanto Drive, all the way from where Encanto passed under I-40 on the east to where it passed under I-40 near downtown. The Ma Deuce equipped Hummers were on both ends and the 6 with the Mark-19's spread out between the two. When the Semis came into view, Gunny held fire until the first semi was just past the first Hummer and then he gave the order to fire at will.

The gunner's knew to lead their targets, but it didn't really matter. The grenades from the Hummers furthest to the west hit the lead semi head on, slowing it and forcing the others to slam on their brakes. The ammo box for the Mark-19 holds 50 rounds and there was six Mark-19's and six semis. Maybe it would be more accurate to say 6 piles of flaming steel wreckage after the Mark-19's spoke with their authoritative voices.

The Ma Deuce gunners raked the trailers making sure that if anyone survived the grenades and the subsequent crashes they didn't survive for long. They reloaded the Ma Deuces and drove onto I-40, slowly passing the wreckage and pouring more ammo into the carnage. Satisfied with their work, Gunny radioed Jim Thomas over at his shop and told him to bring over a dozer to clear the highway. The 8 Humvees returned to the ranch and Gunny got on the radio to Flagstaff informing the replacements for the deceased guard units that their order of Chinese was ready to be picked up whenever they got to Holbrook.

The people who had moved back to Holbrook held a meeting that night and hotly debated whether or not to move back to *The Res*. In the end, they decided not to, but they did ask Gunny if he could spare a Hummer with a Mark-19. Gunny decided that that might be a good idea, and sent Mark-19 equipped Humvees to Holbrook and to Show Low.

The Res now had permanent forward observers 20 miles in either direction. When a detachment showed up in Holbrook the next day from Flagstaff, Gunny was there to meet them. He let the officer in charge know that he expected the Commanding General to provide replacements for the Mark-19's and Humvees plus Ma Deuce equipped

Humvees for Show Low and Holbrook. The Captain in charge of the detail told Gunny, while observing Gunny's handiwork that they would have their 4 vehicles and weapons if he had to go to Barstow and get them himself.

It didn't seem likely that any other country was going to invade the US. Only the Chinese had been starving and much of their armament lay strewn all the way from Alaska to North Dakota. The Canadian military and an American civilian contractor worked until snow fell in the winter gathering the armaments to be recycled into new steel.

They left the bodies lay where they fell. Some future generation might discover the bodies and wonder what great battle had taken place. Slowly the US quieted down and the surviving 40 plus percent of the population tried to rebuild America. The residents of Show Low, Holbrook and now Snowflake contracted with Gunny to act in the capacity of law enforcement for their communities.

Snowflake had several families from the ranch now and there were far more empty homes than occupied homes at the ranch. Some of the people stayed on at the ranch to raise crops and tend to the good-sized herds. In their spare time, they removed every other home and hauled the rock to the other side of the road. As the homes were removed, people tilled in manure and grew their own gardens inside of the compounds. It seemed kind of natural to them, but others thought of it as a busman's holiday.

Starting with some 20 head of cattle and a few sows, the ranch was now producing a lot of livestock and using recovered livestock trailers to deliver it to the ANG. The ANG was a full time job for many. The military acted as a sort of combination state policing agency and food distribution agency to the growing population of Arizona.

A hospital had finally reopened in Phoenix and people were returning to the city from the national forests and mountain areas where they had taken refuge. Doc Robinson and the dentist from Holbrook stayed on at the ranch because the ranch provided a central location from which to provide medical services to the residents of the area.

Gary, Ron and Clarence were really feeling their age. It was one thing to be forced into a do or die survival situation when you were in your twenties or thirties; quite another thing to begin the experience on the Thanksgiving after your 61st birthday (Gary), 63rd birthday (Ron) and 65th birthday (Clarence). Gary was 68, Ron 70 and Clarence 72. They still rode, but once a week rather than once a day. They still went to the range, but once a month rather than once a week. Some of their grandchildren were now young adults. They were content to let the next generation take charge. They still had some good years left, and they wanted the freedom to enjoy them.

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